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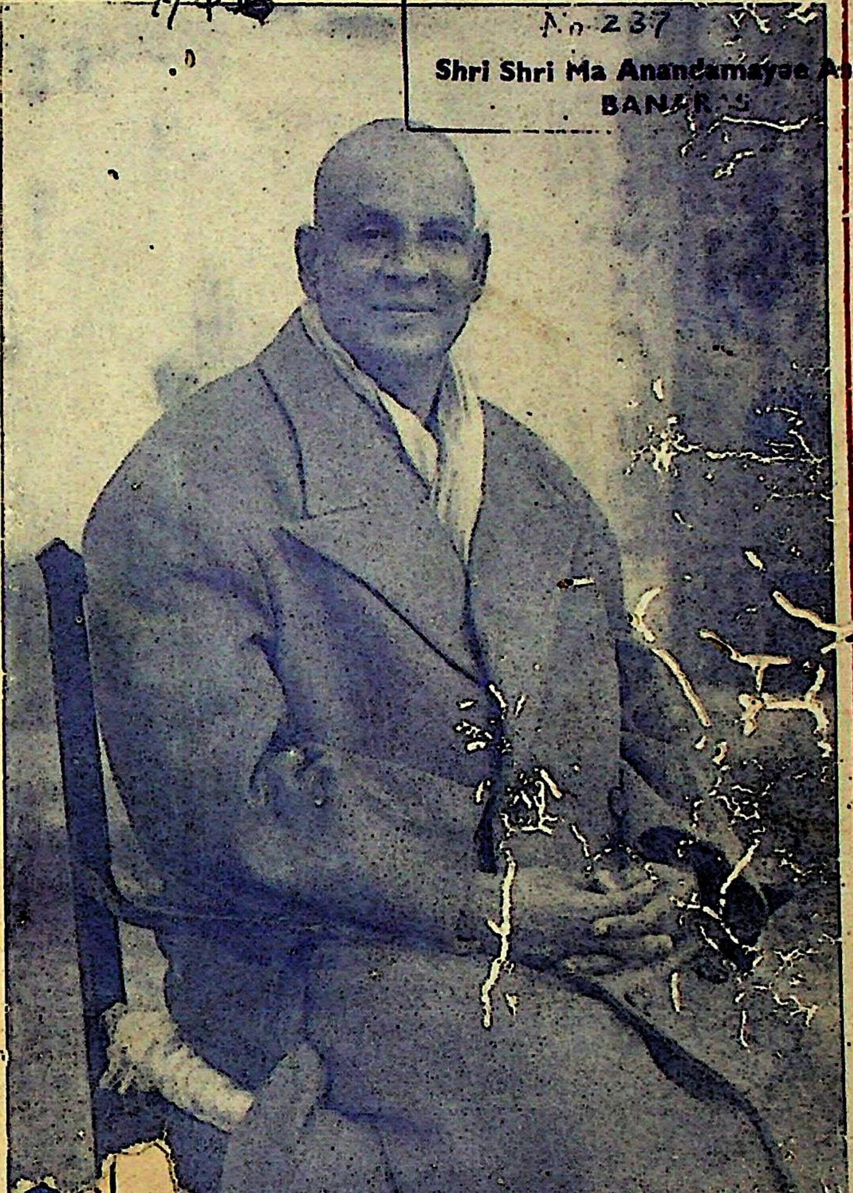

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

9/46

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By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

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PUBLISHERS' TRIBUTE
TO SRI P. K. VINAYAGAM

These priceless precepts have already been made available to seekers after Truth all over the world by one of the earliest and staunchest disciples and devotees of Sri Gurudev. He is Sri P.K. Vinayaga Mudaliar, Editor of "My Magazine of India", a popular Journal issued from Madras. For over TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, he has been regularly serialising in his esteemed Journal, the spiritual lessons of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

A point worth mentioning here is that most of the earliest disciples of the Master (e.g., Sri Swami Paramanandaji, Sri Swami Narayananandaji, Sri Swami Chidanandaji) came into contact with Sri Gurudev and His message, through the pages of "My Magazine". Blessed is Sri Vinayagam and blessed is "My Magazine"; they truly are Sri Gurudev's Divine Hands bringing more and more people to the path of Divine Life, and leading them along to the Great Goal of Life, Self-realisation.

It is eloquent tribute to the faith, zeal and devotion of Sri Vinayagam that whatever be the changes in the shape, nature and periodicity of the Journal, there was this invariable feature in the Journal—Sri Swami Sivananda's "Spiritual Lessons".

Sri Vinayagam also published the first editions of some of the earliest works of Sri Gurudev. It was he who stood as a pillar of Divine Life Society, and a tower of strength to the Mission in the earliest days of the Society. It was he who organised the visit of Sri Swamiji Maharaj to the City of Madras, during his all-India-Ceylon Tour in 1950: the organisation was so perfect that within the four days of Sri Swamiji's stay at Madras, every citizen had had his Darshan and listened to his Upadesh! Later, it was Sri Vinayagam that established the dynamic Divine Life Society Centre at Madras, and infused new life and fresh vigour in the activities of the Society's Branches at Madras.

Sri Vinayaga Mudaliar, is an unostentatious seeker after Truth. A pious, noble and highly evolved soul, he is an ideal Karma Yogi who loves to live and serve in a silent way. He has been a Municipal Councillor and social leader in Madras, and has always associated himself with every nation-building activity in the City.

May God bless him with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha!

8th May, 1858. **Publishers**

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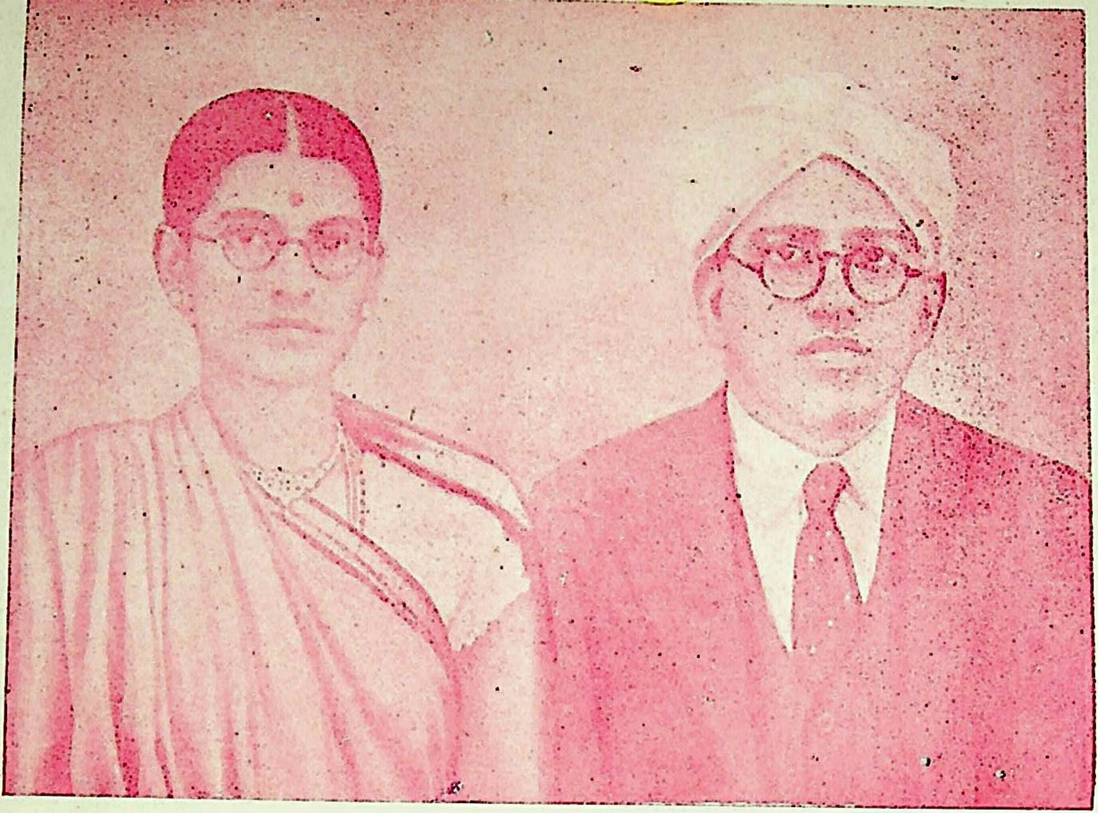

Nagalakshmi Ammal and P.S. Subramania Iyer

SRI P.S. SUBRAMANIA IYER*

Sri P.S. Subramania Iyer, son of Sri Samu Sastrigal, born in 1897 in Pappagudi, a village in Tirunelveli District in South India—studied in the High School at Ambasamudram, in the Hindu College at Tirunelveli and in the St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly from where he took his B.A. degree—started his carrier as a teacher and took to the profession of Accountancy in about 1925—was one of the leading chartered Accountants in Madras for over thirty years during which period he was a member of the Indian Accountancy Board, Delhi for a term of about three years—was of a very pious, benevolent and charitable disposition who endeared himself to one and all by his natural love and affection—breathed his last in January 1956 leaving behind his equally pious, benevolent and charitably disposed wife and all those who drank deep from the fountain of love and affection.

May his soul rest in the Param Dham.

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*In whose sacred memory this book is printed out of the donation given by his Dharmapatni—Sri Nagalakshmi Ammal.

WHY SWAMI SIVANANDA IS RESPECTED AND LOVED MOST

(Sri Indrajit Sharma, M.A.)

There are many saints, sages, savants, seers and eminent Yogins not only in India, but in every part of the wide world. Each saint or eminent Yogi has his own circle of devotees and admirers. Some of them found a new cult, a new faith and a new conception of religion. Most of the sages have a tendency to formulate a certain set sect or school or philosophy. These followers try by all means, fair or foul, to establish the supermacy of the principles embedded in the school of philosophy as enumerated by their master and Guru. Often in the past and frequently in our own time there have occurred fights, quarrells and muds flinging among the followers of the contending schools of philosophy. Religion becomes a means of and the basis for the furtherance of malicious elements and diabolical traits. Religion as grossly misinterpreted has been the cause of many a bloody war in the past.

Swami Sivananda of Ananda Kutir has reshaped the essential core of religion in order to fit it into the present chaotic and complex *structure* of society. He has released the healthy spirit from out of the store house of Hindu Philosophy. He has not created a new faith, nor has he adumbrated new dogmas. He has not founded any new religion.

What he has done and achieved to a fairly appreciable extent is the synthetic treatment of various schools of philosophy culling out. What is good in everything and discarding and reconciled the various warring and fictitious schools of philosophy has presented the world a heartiful anthology of the sententious wisdom discovered from the major religions of the world. He has put the old wine into new bottles with attractive labels of and authenticated and perfect seals. The reason why Swami Sivananda is respected and loved most by the followers of all religions is that he does not denounce any prophet or religion, nor does he follow any set religious principles. He appears to be the meeting ground of the fundamentals of all religions and world faiths.

He hears ill will against none, nurses grudge against none, condemns or curses none. He likes to inspire, guide, uplift and cheer one and all. He underlies in no vituperations, investives and harangue. He radiates peace, light, wisdom and bliss everywhere. He is as much disposed towards the sinners as towards the saints. "Serve the rogues and scoundrels" says the Swami. In this harsh world there appears to be deserts of hot sands of jealousy, greed, lust and aggrandisement, the Swami seems to be a veritable oasis in this world. May the Swami live long.

INTRODUCTION

The life of man in this sense-universe is a life of temptation. Man is born for Self-realisation. He is born for leading a religious life. But he is led astray by the temptations of his environments. He is spoiled by society. He has not got the strength of will to resist the temptations.

A Deputy Commissioner said: "O Swamiji, the world wants bread. I want bread. I care a two pence for the soul. Who wants the soul in these days? Nobody cares for spiritual matters". I replied him: 'you cannot live on bread alone, but you can live on OM, the symbol of Brahman. The mind wants mental food. The soul wants spiritual food'.

The desire to attain knowledge of the Self will dawn in these proud, egoistic people only when they meet some adversities, calamities, troubles and disappointments. The desire to attain the knowledge of the Self dawns in a person who is free from desires for sense-objects. Such a man, with a pure mind alone, is competent to tread the spiritual path.

My heart is filled with joy to see those persons who are filled with spiritual Samskaras and who are attempting for Self-realisation. Even in this iron age (Kali Yuga), when the vast majority of persons run after women and money, there are earnest and sincere young men who want God and God alone. They are exalted personages indeed! My silent adorations to them!

Are you always peaceful? Are you noble? Do you possess self-restraint? Are you endowed with divine virtues? Are you free from ignorance? Do you possess knowledge of the Self? Have you got illumination? Have you realised the immortal pure Self? How do you stand before these questions? If you have not got these things, then come, sit down and read the lessons given in this book. Therein is the message of Amrita for you all. Even if you practise a little of this, you will go beyond death, sorrow and pain.

Life is a great battle-field. Life is a conquest. To live is to fight for the ideal and the goal. Life is a series of awakenings. You must conquer your mind and the senses. These are the real enemies. You must conquer internal and external nature. You must conquer your environments, old evil habits, old evil Samskaras, evil thoughts and evil Vasanas. You must fight against the antagonistic dark forces. You must resist the forces of degeneration.

The greatest victory is the victory over the turbulent mind. The greatest battle is the inner Adhyatmic battle. The greatest hero is one who has conquered the mind.

Become a hero. Conquer the formidable foe, this turbulent mind. Self-conquest is more than many a martyrdom. The inner fight, the fight with evil thoughts, evil Vasanas, cravings and evil Samskaras or mental impressions, is more formidable than the external war. The fight with the mind and the senses is, indeed, more terrible than the outer war.

Be a spiritual hero in the Adhyatmic battle-field. Become a brave, undaunted, spiritual soldier. Fight against the mind, Vasanas, Trishnas, Vrittis and Samskaras boldly. Use the machine-gun of Brahma Vichar to explode the mind efficiently. Dive deep and destroy the under-currents of passion, greed, hatred, pride and jealousy through the sub-marine or torpedo of Japa of OM or Soham. Soar high in the higher regions of bliss of the Self with the help of the aeroplane—Brahmakara Vritti. Use the mines of OM-chanting to explode the Vasanas that are hidden in the sea of the sub-conscious mind. Sometimes move the tanks of discrimination to crush your ten enemies, the ten turbulent senses. Start the Divine League and make friendship with your powerful allies viz., dispassion, fortitude, endurance, serenity, self-restraint, to attack your enemy-mind. Throw the bomb of Sivoham Bhavana to destroy the big mansion of body and the idea, 'I am the body,' 'I am the doer,' 'I am the enjoyer.' Spread profusely the gas of Sattwa to destroy your external enemies Rajas and Tamas quickly. 'Black-out' the mind by destroying the Vrittis, by putting out all the lights or bulbs of sense-objects so that the enemy-mind may not be able to attack you. Fight closely against your enemy-mind with your bayonet of one-pointedness (Samadhana) to get hold of the priceless treasure of the Atmic Pearl. The joy of Samadhi, the bliss of Moksha, the Peace of Nirvana are now yours; whatever you may be, in whatever clime you are born, whatever might be your past life and history, work out your salvation' O Beloved Ram, with the help of the above means and come out victorious right now in this very second.

The lessons given in this book are particularly addressed to those who have no faith in religion, God, the Law of Karma, theory of re-incarnation, a life beyond and an after-world (Metempsychosis, Eschatology, etc.).

These are the collection of the lessons given to the struggling souls in the world, to many atheists, during the last 15 years. Now they are all far advanced in the spiritual line and entirely free from the miseries and troubles of the world.

Through the help of these lessons, many aspirants were able to remove all obstacles and pitfalls in their daily Sadhana and they received a new hope and joy in the spiritual line.

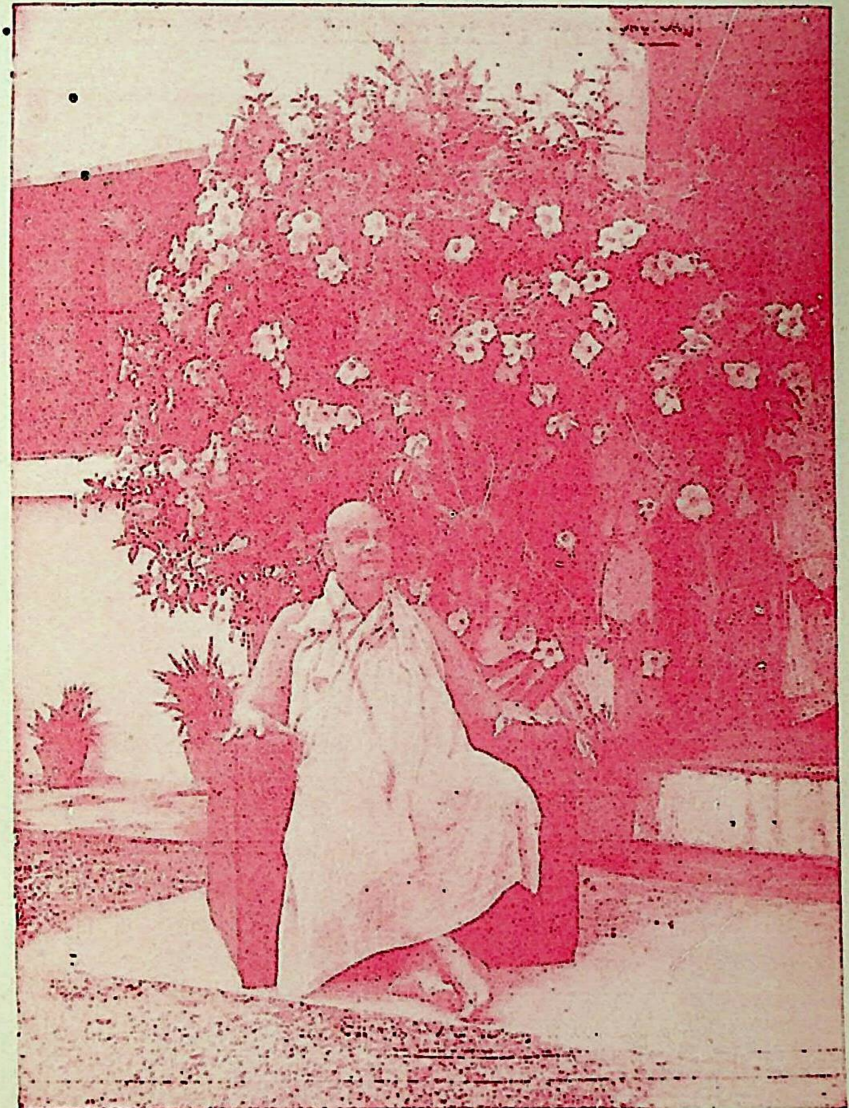
This book is like 'Chintamani' or 'Kalpaka' tree or 'Kamadhenu' cow which will satisfy all desires of people who approach it.

These are the lessons of love, peace and unity. My philosophy and teachings are not for the chosen few, the cultured and the wealthy alone. I am a friend of the poor, the out-caste, the sick, the oppressed, the forlorn, the guilty but penitent transgressor. I live to serve the poor, the sick and the forlorn, and also the criminal. The whole world is my body. The whole world is my home. My Message, my sayings and teachings are meant particularly to the poor, the out-caste, the sick and the oppressed. I embrace all. I include all in my warm embrace. I am a cosmic friend. Anybody can utilise me for his purpose. I belong to all. I am the servant of all. I am the brother of all.

Will you follow my instructions with implicit faith? I have given in this book a spiritual pill for all aspirants, nicely sugar-coated and compressed for ready assimilation and absorption.

Sivanandanagar,
1-6-1958

Swami Sivananda.



SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

PRAYERS

1. PRAYER TO THE GURU

O Venerable Guru! Salutations. Thou hast prescribed for me this kind of Sadhana and that kind of practice. I am full of evil qualities. I have committed various evil actions. If my liberation or attainment of God-consciousness depends upon my own exertion by taking recourse to different practices, where is Thy mercy then, where is Thy Grace, O Lord? Have mercy on me. I am suppliant to Thee.

May my faith and devotion unto Thee never know decay, even in millions of births, through which I may be doomed to pass is all what I pray of Thee!

2. PRAYER TO LORD SIVA

Let us meditate on Lord Siva, the consort of Parvati, the Lord of Lords, the destroyer of Cupid, the Lord of Kailasa, the bestower of knowledge and bliss, the destroyer of all sins, the protector of all beings, who holds a trident and Damaru in His hands and wears a tiger-skin around his hips, who is the best among objects of worship, who is full of auspicious qualities, through whose matted hair the Ganges flows.

Adorations to Lord Siva who is beyond Maya, who is the wielder of Maya, who is the Lord of Yoga, who is capable of being reached through Yoga.

O adorable Lord ! If Thou art gracious, a block of stone can give milk. If Thou art gracious, poison will be turned into nectar. If Thou art gracious, steel can yield butter. O All-merciful Lord! Have mercy on me. Bestow on me Thy grace. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything. Thou art just.

O compassionate Lord! Thou art my father and I am Thy child. Why hast Thou enchained me with these hard fetters? I want to break down this prison of body. I cannot bear the troubles and miseries any longer. Show me Thy smiling face. I wish to hold Thee fast with both of my arms. Come, come, O my sweet Beloved. Do not delay even a second. I am pining for Thy Darshan. Thou only knowest the true conditions of my heart. Thou art alone my goal and sole refuge. O Lord, save me, save me. Lift me upon Thy bosom. I want nothing else but Thee.

O Lord! I know not how to pray or do Japa or meditation, or mental worship. My heart is quite barren. It is destitute of devotion or good virtues. But I occasionally try to remember Thee and serve Sadhus, Sannyasins and poor people. I know only this much. Can I have Thy Mercy, and Grace? O Adorable Father! Bless me with Thy magnanimous vision quickly. I cannot bear the pains of Samsara any longer. I am really pining.

O Sovereign Lord of all creations! I do not want any wealth or Moksha or power or dominion. But I do want that the sufferings and troubles of all beings should come to an end for ever. Thou art an ocean of mercy. Thou art omnipotent. Thou canst do this.

3. PRAYER TO LORD KRISHNA

O Adorable Lord! People proclaim that Thou art Deenabandhu, Deenanatha, Kripanidhi, Kripasagara, Anatha Rakshaka. Thou hast saved Ahalya, Draupadi, Prahlada, Dhruva, Gajendra but in my case Thou hast not done anything. I am still in pain, agony and darkness. I am crying for Thy grace and help. Where hast Thou gone, O absentee land-lord of this world?

O adorable Lord! Thou art the subtlest of the subtle. Hence it is very difficult to understand and realise Thee. Thou art the past, present and future. There is nothing but Thee. Thou art the Infinite Ocean of Grace and Mercy. Thou art known to Thy devotee alone. Thou art without attributes and without forms and yet Thou possessest attributes and forms. It is very difficult to comprehend Thy glory and greatness. Thou art my father, mother, Guru and sole refuge. Salutations unto Thee. Protect me. Guide me. Lift me up from this terrible round of births and deaths.

O adorable Lord of compassion! Salutations unto Thee. Give me inner spiritual strength to resist temptation and melt in Thee this ego which is harder than granite or diamond. Let me always be Thy chosen playmate in the wonderful game you play in all the worlds. Let me understand Thy mysterious Lila or sporting. Let me be a perennial channel of Thy sweet love to all Thy children. Utilise my body, the senses and the mind for Thy unhampered play. O hidden love! O sweet silence! O undecaying beauty! Let my soul rest peacefully in Thee for ever and ever.

O Self-effulgent Lord! The fish cannot live without water. The sun-flower cannot live without the sun. The Pativrata cannot live without her husband. The mind cannot live without Prana. The flame of lamp cannot live without oil. So also I cannot live without Thee, O Lord! Come. Come. Enthrone Thyself in my heart. Thou art the Prana of my Pranas. Thou art the Soul of my soul.

Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, O Lord of compassion! O Abode of this universe! O greatest Guru! O Primeval Soul, O infinite Being! Come. Bless me. Reveal Thyself unto me now. I cannot live without Thee. My heart is restless. Enthrone Thyself in the temple of my heart. I have taken sole refuge in Thee.

O All-merciful Lord! Time is fleeting. The senses are revolting. The mind is jumping. Maya is deluding. The three fires are burning. The five afflictions are tormenting. Friends are disturbing. Diseases are troubling. Heat of summer is scorching. Flies, mosquitoes, bugs, scorpions are teasing. The charms of the world are tempting. I can neither concentrate nor meditate. I cannot do anything in the spiritual path without Thy benign Grace. O Lord! Thou art an ocean of mercy. Bless me. If I get a drop from that ocean of mercy, will it dry up?

Come now, come now, O flute-bearer. Show your effulgent face. How shall I entertain Thee, O son of Devaki? Neither milk is left nor curd nor butter, nor roots (Kandamoola) grow from the earth. Fruits and flowers have passed into the hands of others. Deign to accept my offering of dry vegetables only. Come now. Come now, O Lord Krishna.

O Lord of Brindavan, the joy of Devaki and the refuge of the devotees! Let me repeat Thy name when my Prana leaves my body. Let my Prana leave the body either in

Brindavan on the banks of the Jumna or in Rishikesh or Benares on the banks of the Ganges. Stand before me with the flute filled with its tune, with crown on Thy head. Let me meditate on this form when my Prana leaves my body. Make me hear Thy melodious flute. Let the Tulasi leaf and Thy Charanamrita be in my mouth. Let my Prana depart with ease. Let me escape from the terrible pain. Let no disease torment me when the breath approaches the throat. O Lord of my breath, come soon at that time. Do not forget this, my beloved Krishna. This is my fervent prayer. You will not lose anything if you accept this. Is this not a part of your duty? This is my humble request, O All-merciful Lord! Everything is left to Thy choice. Do as you like please. I know that you are Bhaktavatsala, lover of devotees and Patitapavana, redeemer of the fallen. You are already bound by the string of my love. You cannot certainly escape now. Can you, my sweet Beloved?

Let our tongue sing Thy glory; let our ears hear Thy wonderful deeds; let our hands offer flowers unto Thee and serve humanity; let our minds meditate on Thy beautiful form; let our eyes see Thy sacred feet and charming face; let our feet take us to the holy places of pilgrimage and the abode of Saints!

4. PRAYER TO LORD RAMA

O Ram! In essence Thou art the Light of lights. Thou art the source of everything. Thou art the infinite powerhouse. Thou art the beauty of beauties. It is Thy effulgent light that lends life and lustre to the Himalayan snowy peaks, sun, moon, stars, flowers, and trees, the great scientists, poets, orators, politicians, scholars, philosophers, doctors. Thou art that power which moves the steam-engines, aeroplanes, steamers, railway engines, motor cars, etc. Thou art the beauty at sunset, brilliance in the diamond, the sweet charming smile in a young maiden, strength in the athletes, endurance in ascetics, intelligence in genius. Above, below, to the right, to the left, in front, behind and everywhere Thy sweet effulgent, majestic, magnanimous presence shines.

In the inside of every object there is one Ram alone without any interstice. Wherever I see there is Ram. Wherever I go there is Ram. He ever sports in joy. The whole world is His Lila. In the flower, in the tree, in the sky there is Ram. In the water, in the wood, in the food, there is Ram. In the post, in the wall there is Ram. In the umbrella, in the pen, in the paper there is Ram. Here is Ram, there is Ram. There is no world without Ram. This universe is filled with Ram. Everything is Ram. There is nothing without Ram. How can I describe His unparalleled glory? Victory to Ram. Glory to Ram. Adorations to Ram. Salutations to Ram. Prostrations to Ram.

O All-merciful Lord! I do not want any higher attainment in the spiritual path. I do not want Siddhis. I do not want either Mukti or Self-realisation. Kindly confer on me even a small ray of that magnanimous virtue Ahimsa. Let not the words I speak hurt a bit the feelings of others. Bless me with this attribute. With that I can slowly climb up to the top of the spiritual ladder like the snail. This is my fervent prayer. O Beloved Ram, have mercy on me. Many a time I have prayed. My prayer still remains unanswered. Perhaps I am still unfit to receive Thy bounty and grace. Let me make myself worthy, O Lord of compassion!

O Lord! Forgive all my sins completely. I am unable to control the restless Indriyas and mind. What shall I do, my Lord? I am helpless. I am struck with fear at the frequent thought of the many hardships that beset this life. Where shall I go? Thy lotus-feet are my sole refuge. I prostrate at thy lotus-feet again and again. Raise me up from the vast ocean of miseries in which I am drowned. Trahi, Trahi, Prachodayat, Prachodayat, my Lord!

O Lord! Have mercy upon me. Open my inner eye (the Divyachakshus). Let me have Thy grand vision (Viswarupa-Darshan). Bhaktas sing about Thee as "Patitapavana," (Purifier of the fallen ones), "Bhaktavatsala" (lover of the devotees), "Deenadayalu" (merciful towards helpless people). Just as the bird protects the young ones under its wings, so also protect me under Thy wings (Thy lotus-like feet).

5. PRAYER TO MOTHER

Salutations to the Divine Mother who exists in all beings in the form of intelligence, mercy and beauty. Salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations, salutations.

O loving Mother! Thou art the Primal energy. Thou hast two aspects viz., the terrible and the peaceful. Thou art modesty, gentleness, shyness, generosity, courage, forbearance and patience. Thou art faith in the heart of devotees and nobility in noble people, chivalry in warriors and ferocity in tigers. Give me strength to control the mind and the Indriyas. Make me worthy to dwell in Thee. Salutations unto Thee.

O adorable mother! Thou hast generated this great illusion by which all people walk deluded in this world. All sciences have come from Thee. Without Thy grace no one can get success in spiritual Sadhana and salvation in the end. Thou art the seed for this world. Thou hast two aspects, viz., the unmanifested aspect or Avyaktam and the manifested aspect or the gross universe. The whole world gets dissolved in Avyaktam during Pralaya. Give me the Divine eye. Let me behold Thy real majestic form. Help me to cross over this illusion.

Salutations O sweet Mother! the consort of Lord. Siva! O mother Parvati! Thou art Lakshmi. Thou art Saraswati. Thou art Kaali, Durga and Kundalini. Thou art the embodiment of all power. Thou art Para Shakti. Thou art in the form of all objects. Thou art the sole refuge for all. Thou hast enchanted the whole world. The whole universe is the play of Thy three Gunas. How can I praise Thee? Thy glory is indescribable. Thy splendour is ineffable. Protect me. Guide me.

O compassionate Mother! I bow to Thee. Thou art my saviour. Thou art my goal. Thou art my sole support. Thou art my guide and the remover of all afflictions, troubles and miseries. Thou art an embodiment of auspiciousness. Thou pervadest the whole universe. The whole universe is filled with Thee. Thou art the store-house of all virtues. Do Thou protect me. I again and again salute Thee!

O Mother Supreme! When shall I have equal vision and balanced mind? When shall I be established in Ahimsa, Satya and Brahmacharya? When shall I have Thy cosmic vision? When shall I enter in deep meditation and Samadhi? When shall I get deep abiding peace and perennial joy?

O radiant Mother! I have not done any spiritual Sadhana or service of teachers. I have not practised any Vrata, pilgrimage, charity, Japa, meditation or worship. I have not studied religious scriptures. I have neither discrimination nor dispassion. I have neither purity nor burning yearning for liberation. Thou art my only refuge. My silent adorations unto Thee. I am Thy meek suppliant. Remove the veil of ignorance.

Prostrations unto Thee O gracious Mother! Where art Thou? Do not forsake me. I am Thy child. Take me to the other shore of fearlessness and joy. When shall I behold Thy lotus-feet with my own eyes? Thou art boundless ocean of mercy. When the philosopher's stone turns iron into gold by contact, when the Ganges turns impure water into pure water, canst Thou not turn me, O mother Divine, into a pure soul? May my tongue repeat Thy names always!

O glorious Mother! Salutations to Thee! All women art Thy parts. Mind, egoism, intellect, body, Prana, senses, are Thy forms. Thou art Para Shakti or Para-Prakriti and Apara-Prakriti. Thou art electricity, magnetism, force, energy, power, will. All forms are Thy forms only. Reveal to me the mystery of creation. Bestow on me the Divine knowledge.

Through Thy light the sun shines, the intellect functions, the senses operate. Through Thy power the fire burns. Through Thy Shakti the wind blows, the rivers flow towards the sea, the magnet attracts the iron, the flower blossoms and atoms move. Thou art electricity, magnetism and ultra violet rays. How can I, an unworthy, bow down to Thee or praise Thee, who art worshipped by Hari, Hara and Brahma (Virinchi) and others.

O Mother Divine! Sprinkling a shower of nectar, dripping from Thy pair of feet, over the manifestation formed of Shad Chakras, the seat of mind, etc., regaining Thy original seat by the light of teachings in the six Shakta Granthas and changing Thy form in three and a half serpentine coils, Thou sleepest in the hollow of the triangular seat at Muladhara.

O Mother Kundalini! Having pierced the six Chakras—Prithvi, or the earth in the four petalled lotus at Muladhara, the water in the six-petalled lotus at Swadhishthana, the fire in the ten-petalled lotus at Manipura, the air in the twelve-petalled lotus at the Anahata (heart), the ether in the sixteen-petalled lotus at the Vishuddha (throat) and the mind in the two-petalled lotus between the eye-brows in the Ajna Chakra—Thou sportest with Thy consort Paramasiva in the thousand petalled lotus Sahasrara all alone.

If you are not able to lift up a big stone or carry a bag of rice your friends say that you have no Shakti. They never say that you have neither Vishnu nor Siva. This goes to prove that Shakti is the foremost deity and Brahma, Vishnu, Siva carry out Her behests. You will find the following statement in Ananda Lahari written by Sri Sankaracharya, "Siva is able to create only when He is united with Shakti. Without Her He will be unable even to make a little movement." Worship the Mother and obtain Her grace. She will confer on you Moksha (eternal bliss) or freedom.

6. VEDANTIC PRAYER

I

O Lord ! Thou art the creator of this universe. Thou art the protector of this world. Thou art in the grass and the rose. Thou art in the sun and the stars. Salutations unto Thee, O destroyer of the whole cycle of births and deaths. Salutations unto Thee, O bestower of bliss and immortality!

O Lord! Thou art the cause of all, but art Thyself causeless. Thou art without any form and yet thou art the possessor of countless forms. Thou art the goal of all scrip-:ures, the great refuge of all creatures and the bestower of mancipation. Salutations unto Thee O All-merciful Lord!

Thou art the true essence. Thou art without beginning, niddle and end. Thou art pure by Thy own nature. Thou art the pure, unborn, and undying one. Thou art free and boundless like the space. Thou art the unchangeable, homogeneous essence without form, without attribute, without colour, without shape and without death.

I bow to Thee, O Secret of secrets! I bow to Thee, O Indweller of our hearts! I bow to Thee, O silent witness of all activities of all minds! I bow to Thee, O inner ruler of all beings! I bow to Thee, O thread-soul who connects all beings, who pervades and permeates and interpenetrates all things of this universe!

O God, make me immortal in that region wherein happiness and bliss are abundant, wherein joy and cheerfulness ever reign supreme and wherein all desires are completely gratified. O all-merciful Lord! Let me have liberation and freedom.

O Sweet Lord! May I be free from the bonds of death.

May I never again forget my immortal nature. May I be able to look upon all beings with equal vision! May I attain the supreme seat of Brahman! May I be free from impurity and sin! May I know my real essential nature!

Thou art the peasant and the King. Thou art the rogue and the saint. Thou art the maiden and the man. Thou art the child and the father. Thou art the seed and the fruit. Thou art the five elements and their combinations. Thou art the ocean and the rivers. Thou art ugliness and beauty. Thou art merit and demerit. The whole universe is within Thy womb.

O Lord of Light! O shining One! I live for Thee, I behold Thee in the smile of children, in the tears of the afflicted, in my thoughts, emotions, sentiments, in the morning dew of the Himalayan landscape, and in the rays of the sun. My room is filled with Thy sweet presence. I eat Thy benign grace in my daily food. I taste Thy radiant love in my daily drink. Thou art the ocean of love and compassion. Let my love for Thee become a roaring flame. Withdraw from me whatever evil that is hidden. Fill my heart with purity, goodness, love and sublime virtues. Make me immortal.

II

Adorations and salutations to that one supreme Imperishable Self or Brahman which dwells in you, in me and in all, which is the only Reality.

The one, who himself without colour, by the manifold application of his power distributes many colours in His hidden purpose, and into whom, its end and its beginning, the whole world dissolves—He is God. May He endow us with clear intellect!

Thou art Light Divine. Thou art Light of knowledge. Thou art the dispeller of darkness. Thou art the Supreme Guru. Thou art beyond the reach of mind and speech. Thou art beyond any kind of limitation. Thou art the over-soul. Thou art the Self of this universe.

O Lord! Thou art the Indweller in all! Thou art the soul in all. Thou art the womb of all. Thou art the protector of all. Thou art the bestower of fruits of Karmas to all. Thou art all. Thou dwellest in all. Thou art the source of all. Thou art the giver of Moksha to all. Prostrations unto Thee.

Let us meditate on the Supreme Being, the Indivisible, the existence-knowledge-bliss absolute, the All-full, one without a second, beyond the reach of words and thought, and the substratum of all.

O adorable Self-effulgence, light of lights, ocean of bliss, O Jagad Guru ! O wisdom honey ! Garden of Kalpa Vriksha, mountain of mercy, O Bhagavan ! bestower of Moksha, embodiment of peace, O hidden Tureeya, O transcendental essence! River of nectar-joy. Remove the veil and bless me with Thy ineffable and stupendous vision.

O All-merciful Lord! Through Thy grace, may I realise Truth. May I always entertain sublime thoughts. May I realise myself as the Light Divine. May I be free from greed, lust, egoism, jealousy, hatred. May I serve the humanity with Atma Bhava. May I behold the one sweet, immortal Self in all beings. May I realise Brahman with pure understanding !

May that Light of lights ever guide me ! May He cleanse my mind of all impurities. May He inspire me. May He bestow on me power, courage and strength. May He remove the veil in the mind. May He remove all obstacles in the spiritual path. May He make my life happy and fruitful. I bow to Thee, O Lord of Lords. O God of Gods! O Deva of Devas, the Brahman of the Upanishads, the support for Maya and Ishwar and the supreme bridge to Immortality.

Tapa of three kinds burns me in the extreme. Avidya's Chamatkar shines everywhere. Bad appears good, body looks like Atma. There is Bhranti Sukh in sensual objects. O hidden Light! O undecaying Beauty! Remove the veil of Nama Rupa. Let me rest in Asti-bhati-priya. O Infinity, Eternity, Immortality! Let my mind melt in profound Brahmic silence,—my birthright, my centre, my goal and ideal.

III

From whom is born this mysterious universe, by whom alone it is upheld and in whom alone it is dissolved—to that Para Brahman or Supreme Self, who is existence Absolute, Consciousness Absolute and Bliss Absolute, be this salutation!

O Self-effulgent Lord! Thou art the supporter, the saviour, the creator, the inner Ruler, the Governor, the Master, the protector, and the Deliverer. Thou art the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance. Thou art the destroyer of the three kinds of Tapaas or fevers of human beings. Thou art the remover of the miseries and sufferings of Thy devotees. O venerable Lord! Salutations unto Thee! In thee I take refuge. Give me purity and devotion. Let my wandering, mischievous mind always rest in Thee.

O indweller of all beings! Thou art the baby, thou art the Saint, thou art the scoundrel, thou art dishonesty, thou art piety, thou art Tapas, thou art Samadhi, thou art the sage, thou art the Yogi with eight kinds of powers. Thou art omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

Salutations to the cows, dogs, monkeys, birds, trees, flowers, as these are the different forms of the Lord in His manifested aspect. He is hidden in them, just as butter is hidden in the milk.

Salutations to Thee, O Supreme Lord! Thou art without beginning and end. Thou art the flower. Thou art the bee. Thou art woman. Thou art man. Thou art the sex. Thou art the waves. Thou art the sandow. Thou art the old man tottering with a stick. Thou art the saint. Thou art the rogue. Thou art everything. How can I describe Thee!

O adorable Lord! Thou art the blue sky, thou art the ocean, thou art the lightning, thou art the mind, thou art the tree with fruits, thou art the rose, thou art the sun, the moon and the stars. Thy face is turned everywhere in this universe.

Thou art Eka (one). Thou art Aneka (many). This is the Saguna aspect. Thou art neither Eka nor Aneka. This is thy transcentental aspect. Thou art Dwaita. Thou art Adwaita. Thou art neither Dwaita nor Adwaita. Thou art beyond Dwaita and Adwaita. Thou art Sakara and Nirakara. Thou art Saguna. Thou art Nirguna. Thou art beyond Saguna and Nirguna. Thou art nothing. Thou art everything. Thou art neither nothing nor everything. Thou art beyond nothing and everything.

Thou art self-luminous. Thou art without parts, without actions, without limits, without taint or fault, without birth and death. Thou art our father, mother, brother, friend, relative, Guru and sole refuge. Thou art the embodiment of peace, bliss, knowledge, power, strength and beauty.

O Lord ! if thou art the sun, then I am Thy ray; if Thou art the ocean, I am Thy wave; if Thou art the Himalayas, I am the tree; if Thou art the Ganges, I am Thy drop; if Thou art the garden, I am Thy flower; if Thou art the electric light, then I am Thy bulb; if Thou art the landscape, I am Thy grass. By loving Thee, I have become immortal. The noose of Yama is cut asunder. Salutations unto Thee.

OM is the word of power. OM is the sacred monosyllable. OM is the highest Mantra. OM is the symbol of Brahman. OM is Soham. OM is OM TAT SAT. Om is the source for everything. OM is the womb of Vedas. OM is the basis of all languages. All trinities merge in OM.

All sounds proceed from OM. All objects exist in OM. O Sweet OM ! O potent Pranava ! The life of my life. The boat to cross this Samsara ! Harbinger of eternal Bliss ! My redeemer and saviour ! Guide me and take to Brahman, the hidden Sage.

7. UNIVERSAL PRAYER—I

O hidden Life! O hidden consciousness, O Intelligence! O hidden power! O hidden light! Lead us on from unreal to real, from darkness to light, from mortality to immortality and reveal Thyself to those sincere aspirants who tread on the path of truth. Have pity on those rank materialists and confirmed atheists, scoffers, unbelievers, and sceptics and bestow on them inner Light, eternal bliss, supreme peace and pure understanding to feel Thy presence and existence in every object and atom, in every moment, in sentiments and thoughts, in emotions and feelings and in all actions.

Adorations to the Supreme Being, who dwells in the hearts of all beings, who is in the fire and water, who is in the planets, herbs and trees, who is in the stones, bricks and iron bars, who has pervaded the whole universe.

May that God, who though one and unseen dispenses unto all creatures their desired objects according to the varying necessities of all, by virtue of His many powers, and in whom the world from the beginning to the end is established, give unto us the right understanding.

Let us meditate on the glory and splendour of that supreme Being, who illumines everything. May He guide us in all our actions. May He grant us a clear understanding and a pure intellect.

Let there be peace in heaven, let there be peace in the atmosphere; may peace fill the four quarters, may the waters and medicinal herbs bring peace, may plants give peace to all beings, may the Vedas spread peace everywhere, may all other objects everywhere give us peace and may that peace come to us and remain with us for ever. (Yajur Veda 36-37).

O sweet spring! the harbinger of joy, the bestower of delicious fruits! In the spiritual world thou art Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Yogis, the bestower of the immortal fruit of wisdom of the Self. Dwell in the hearts of all aspirants. O Holi!

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

chidananda Atma.
O adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient
Thou art Satchidananda.
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.
Grant us an understandingheart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptation and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed and hatred.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.
Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—*Sri Swami Sivananda*

BHAGAVAD GITA

FOR THE BLIND

(By the Grace of God, and the help and co-operation of Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryoo, renowned Eye-Surgeon of Virnagar, the sublime scripture, viz., Bhagavad Gita, would be made available to the blind people of the world. This book has been specially written by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, giving the very essence of the Gita, in a manner suitable to the blind.

It is highly interesting to note that the cost of printing the first edition in Braille would be borne by Dr. Adhwaryoo, from donations received through Eye Relief Camps in Gujarat at which Dr. Adhwaryoo gives free medical and surgical treatment to those who suffer from eye diseases.)

BHAGAVAD GITA

FOR THE BLIND

INTRODUCTION

The Gita is a book for the blind. You will be surprised to know that the first Sloka is the utterance of a blind king. He was Dhritarashtra. He was blind and he had a hundred wicked sons. They were inimical towards his brother's sons, the Pandavas.

From their childhood the Kauravas, that is Dhritarashtra's sons, hated the Pandavas. The Kauravas were wicked; the Pandavas were noble and good. The Kauravas tried their best to kill Pandavas. When that was impossible, they tried to cheat the Pandavas. By improper means, the Kauravas robbed the Pandavas of their kingdom and sent them away to the forest.

In all trials the Pandavas were victorious because they were good. God is on the side of the good. You know the inspiring motto which our Government has adopted: *Satyameva Jayate.* Truth alone triumphs. Good wins ultimately. Evil cannot exist for long. It is the Mahabharata that clearly illustrates this motto.

When all other methods failed, Kauravas and Pandavas had to fight a battle. The battle lasted eighteen days. The Kaurava army was very big. The Pandava army was small. The Kaurava army had many great warriors. The Pandavas did not have so many. But the Pandavas had Dharma on their side. God was on their side. So, they won ultimately.

That is the story in short. Now let us turn to the Gita itself.

CHAPTER ONE

Dhritarashtra was blind. But he was blind to moral values also. That is worse. You should avoid that by all means. He knew and the wise men of his court often told him that his sons were going the wrong way. But he refused to correct them. Why? Because, he was greatly attached to them. His love for them was blind. At the beginning of the Gita, he asks Sanjaya: "My children and the Pandavas had met on the battle-field. What did they do?" Sanjaya had a supernatural vision. Sitting in the Palace, he was able to see what was going on in the battle-field.

Sanjaya narrates the story. The armies of the Kauravas and Pandavas were ready to fight. The signal for the commencement of the war had been given.

Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, wanted to have a good look at both the armies. His charioteer was Lord Krishna, considered a Divine Incarnation. Krishna placed the chariot between the two armies. Arjuna saw on both sides, his own relatives and teachers. Obviously so, because it was a fight between cousins. He was blinded by misplaced sympathy. At that moment he did not care for Dharma or Adharma. He refused to fight.

Man is distinguished from beast by the sixth sense. He has an extra eye. It is the eye of discrimination. When one or the other of the five senses do not function, it is the sixth sense that helps. In fact even those who have the five senses are asked to control them. All the energy that flows through them will then make the sixth sense very powerful.

Delusion blinds the eye of discrimination. Delusion is real blindness. Delusion is like madness, like the state of drunkenness. Under its influence, man considers not what to do and what not to do. Arjuna was deluded for the time being. Because, he too, like Dhritarashtra felt "These are my people." Delusion always begins with attachment.

Deluded Arjuna treats Krishna as an ordinary human being. He thinks that he knows everything. He thinks he is right in refusing to fight.

Delusion is weakness. Grief, disappointment, dejection, delusion—all these weaken you. If you think of it for a moment you will readily understand what a great power this mind has got. However strong you are physically, however intelligent you are mentally, if you yield to dejection or grief or delusion, all your strength and intelligence will leave you. You will actually feel weak in body and mind. Arjuna was unable to stand. He sat down dejected. Here is a lesson. Do not yield to delusion. Never get dejected. Be always strong-willed. You can always work wonders.

CHAPTER TWO

The second chapter of the Gita contains its very essence. It contains a few excellent mottoes. Remembering them, you will always be happy and peaceful.

The very first advice given by Sri Krisna is grand. I will quote the words here so that you can use it as a formula for peace:

Asochyaan Anvasochastwam

It means: "You grieve over that which should not give rise to grief." How often this is true of you! There are so many things you are worried about. Imaginary troubles are the worst. You are afraid of the future. You are worried that you may suffer. These are the actions of a foolish man. The future is in the lap of God. The past is over. The present is in your hands. If you live this day in a divine way, your future is bound to be glorious. Banish worry with the help of this formula and be bold and cheerful.

Krishna gives various reasons for asking Arjuna not to worry. The most important one is the distinction between the immortal soul and the perishable body. This is perhaps difficult to understand at once. But it is well worth your thought. Think deeply over this truth. You had an instrument, the eye, with which you were able to see. You lost it: but you have not lost yourself with it! Similarly, this body and this mind also, are instruments only. They are not permanent. But there is something within you which uses these instruments. It exists now and uses these instruments. Even after these instruments are lost, it will continue to exist. Just as you put on your coat, come out of your room, go to another and take off your coat, that something put on this body, came into this world, and threw away this body and went into another. This change cannot be avoided. That which cannot be cured must be endured: the more cheerfully you endure it, the more happy and peaceful you will be. Therefore, as a supplement to the above motto, Krishna gives another:

Ajo Nityah Saaswatoyam Puraano
Na Hanyate Hanyamaane Sareere

The soul is immortal. The body has to perish. When you are prepared to throw away this body itself, how can you worry over something which is even less permanent? Therefore, fearlessly do your duty. Do not bother about success or failure, pain or pleasure. All these are fleeting and temporary. Therefore, always remember:

Karmanyevaadhikaaraste Maa Phaleshu Kadaachana

(Your privilege is to work. You have no control over the outcome.)

But do your duty you must. Never try to escape from the performance of your duty. When you succeed or fail in the task undertaken, perform it well. Realise that the result is not your concern. Therefore, be equanimous in success or failure, for

Samatwam Yoga Uchyate

(Equanimity is Yoga.)

This equanimity is peace. This is happiness. That is what everybody wants and nobody seems to get. Why? Because you are full of various desires. You are unable to do your duty for duty's sake. You always have some motive. You are attached to something or other in this world. When you remove all these, when you become desireless, then you will enjoy peace and bliss. Only then will you know what real peace is, what real happiness is. Because you will be equanimous in success and failure, pain and pleasure, that peace and happiness will remain permanently with you. Therefore remember:

Vihaaya Kaamaan Yah Sarvaan Pumaan Charati
Nisprihah
Nirmamo Nirahankaarah Sa Saantim Adhigachchati.

It means: "He who is without desires and has given up attachment and egoism, attains peace."

CHAPTER THREE

What is Yoga?

The word is from a Sanskrit root-word which means "to unite". Yoga is union of the individual soul with God. God dwells in all. Therefore, Yoga amounts to our union with all. To feel and to actually realise we are one with all—this is the goal. Please remember this.

The Yoga that is taught in the Bhagavad Gita is highly practical. It is universal. It is eternal. It applies to all at all times. It is based on another fundamental principle of creation. Everything that has life grows; there is movement, action and growth. In the words of the Gita: "You cannot remain idle for a moment." Even if you are sitting quiet, you are breathing, you are thinking. To make all this help you to attain the goal is Yoga. The eighteen chapters of the Gita tell you how to do this.

The world has been created and is maintained on some laws. For instance, you will readily understand that the law of love and co-operation operates everywhere. There is interdependence everywhere. Man feeds cows, for instance; and the cows provide man's food. This is true of everything here. There is such interdependence between man and animal, between man and plants, between animals and plants.

If you remember these three, you know the Yoga of the Gita:

1. God pervades all beings.
2. All things in the world are interdependent.
3. You cannot help being constantly active.

You have to attain union with God who pervades everything. So, you have to serve everything. Serve—not with the idea of getting something in return. That will only strengthen the idea of difference. Your aim is to feel that you are one with all. Elsewhere, we have a beautiful description of God. The sun, the moon, man, animals, plants,—all these are said to be different parts of the body of God. That idea will help you feel your oneness with everything. When a thorn enters your foot, your hand automatically goes there to remove the thorn. Does it demand a fee? Does the hand ask for a certificate? That should be your attitude when you serve others. That is real selfless service. It is that which will enable you to realise your unity with everything. That you know is the goal. Such service is called Yajna, sacrifice. What is sacrificed in this? Selfishness is sacrificed. Egoism is sacrificed. The idea that "I am different from others" is sacrificed.

The main obstacle to such service is desire. When you want something for yourself, you will not serve others unselfishly. Desire will only make you feel that you are different from others. Therefore, become desireless. Desirelessness will give you peace. You will enjoy great happiness if you become desireless.

CHAPTER FOUR

Man's will is weak. You are unable to practise what you know is good. Something which you cannot explain seems to compel you to do wrong. This is what in our philosophical books is called Maya. It is undivine. It is evil.

It is easier to roll down than to rise up. In the world it is easier to do evil actions than to be good and do good. When some one insults you, it is easier to scold him back, than to endure it patiently. When you are not given what you need, it is easier to get angry than to be calm and contented. When you have committed a mistake, it is easier to hide it with a lie, than to admit it openly. To become divine is an uphill task. To behave like a beast is quite easy.

So, people gradually become less righteous. Evil seems to grow in the world. Man becomes selfish. No one wants to serve. Selfishness makes man fight with another man. Vices grow. Virtue declines. The Lord gives us a grand assurance here: "Whenever virtue declines and vice grows, I descend on earth to re-establish righteousness." God comes into the world in several forms. He protects the good. He destroys evil. Once again, spiritual values gain a place over material values. Once again, man feels it is better to serve and suffer than to enjoy at another's expense.

Once again people begin to be unselfish. They perform various kinds of sacrifices. Pranayam is a sacrifice. Self-control is a sacrifice. Preaching Dharma is a sacrifice. There are various sacrifices. Learn them from a master. Serve your master. Surrender yourself to him. He will teach you the way that is suited to you.

Right knowledge of this Yoga is essential. Your Guru will be able to prescribe exactly what you should do to reach the goal. He will enable you to know God. Knowledge of the Omnipresence of God will make your whole life divine. All your actions will become Yoga.

CHAPTER FIVE

You know a number of dots arranged in a particular way denotes the word "God." But, those dots are not God. They represent the word; the word reminds you of God. But people have a habit of identifying the two.

It was said that only through renunciation, they could reach the goal. Renunciation meant Sannyasa. Some ceremonies had to be performed. They were intended to remind him of the true spirit of renunciation. But man forgot this.

He stuck to the ceremony, but ignored its meaning.

Krishna re-defines Sannyasa. "He is an eternal Sannyasi who does not desire for anything nor hates anything." That is the Yoga of the Gita. You should become desireless. You should feel oneness with all. Then how can you hate anything?

What is to be renounced, then?

Attachment should be renounced. This is very difficult. It requires great vigilance. Everyone is attached to so many things. Father, mother, wife, children, house and property, —you are attached to these. You are attached to certain ideas. You are attached to a religion, a form of God, a system of philosophy. You have your own ideas of right and wrong, and you are attached to them. All these have to be renounced.

Another renunciation is frequently mentioned in Gita. Renunciation of Karma-Phala—the fruits of actions. Do not expect a big reward when you do a bit of service. Let service become your very nature. Do you know what is disappointment? You expect something, and when you do not get it, there is disappointment. If you do not expect, you will never be disappointed. He who serves all unselfishly will never be disappointed. He will be always happy.

With your inward eye you must see God in all beings. Remove from your mind all ideas of a big man or a small man, a rich man or a poor man, a pious man or a wicked man. If you entertain such ideas, you will not be able to serve all. If you realise that God alone dwells in all, you will live in Him. You will become one with Him. You will feel you are serving Him alone in all. You will feel that He and He alone comes to you in various forms and helps you. There is a mysterious power in this feeling itself. Try for yourself. God will come to you and serve you, even as He served Surdas.

What is there in this world which you should desire? Everything perishes here. Whatever you need you will get. Mother Nature is kind. God is compassionate. Do not run after the objects of this world. They cannot give you real happiness. They only exhaust your vitality, waste your life, and weaken your will-power.

CHAPTER SIX

All this is possible only when you have controlled your mind. Mind has to be studied and controlled by itself. One part of the mind should study the rest. The pure mind should control the impure mind. The enemy is within; and your best friend is within you. It is the mind. The uncontrolled mind is your enemy. The controlled mind is your friend.

How is the mind brought under control?

By Abhyasa and Vairagya. Abhyasa is exercise, practice. Vairagya is dispassion, the opposite of desire for objects of enjoyment. The mind is ordinarily restless. It is very difficult to control it. But a man of dispassion, who practises concentration is able to control it.

Lord Krishna gives a detailed lesson in concentration. Please try it.

Select a good spot where you will not be disturbed, which is neither very low nor very high above the ground. Spread a Kusa-grass mattress, over it a deer-skin and over that, too, a piece of cloth. This is the ideal seat for meditation. Sit erect on this seat. Hold the back and the head straight. Be steady. Do not shake the body. Direct your attention to the centre between the eye-brows. Think of God and nothing else. If the mind runs, bring it again and again to this centre and to this thought of God. Repetition of the name of your favourite form of God will help you.

This exercise will give you a fair amount of control over your mind. It will take you nearer to God. As you progress, you will enjoy great peace of mind. You will be ever cheerful. There is a very great assurance in the Gita. This peaceful and cheerful state of mind, this constant communion with God—which is Yoga—is the greatest acquisition. Once you have got it, you will want nothing else. Once you are established in it, you will not be shaken by any calamity. You will know how to withdraw the mind from the disturbing factor. You will know how to connect it with God, the source of peace and joy.

Practice leads to perfection. You will, by and by, be able to see everything within yourself and realise the all-pervading nature of God. Your inner eye of intuition will be opened. The loss of physical sight, the loss of external vision, is nothing; through practice of concentration and meditation, open the inner eye of intuition and see God within yourself.

This is not the work of a day. To control the mind is not so easy. If your heart is pure, if your mind is not full of wrong thoughts, desires and ambitions, you will get control over it quickly. Otherwise it may take a long time. But, here is a bold assurance. There is absolutely no loss in the practice of this Yoga. If you attain the goal in this life itself, it is very good. Even if you do not, what you have done in this birth will help you in your next birth like a good bank balance. You will be able to start from where you left in this birth and continue onwards. Therefore, strive by every means in your power to practise this Yoga.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Here is an effective way to constant meditation. Sitting in a secluded place for an hour or two a day and meditating on God alone will not do. You should consciously think of God throughout the waking hours. Then your subconscious mind will continue to think of Him even in sleep.

The practice of the Presence of God is a very practical way to conquest of mind, control of senses and eradication of evil qualities. God who is called by various names by people of various temperaments, is also the soul of your soul. He is the soul of the entire creation. Just as you have insensible parts in your body like the hair, the nails, etc., and the sensitive parts in your body, there are two types of Nature in God. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and also the ego—these belong to the lower nature of God. The higher nature of God is the individual soul in all beings. He is the Divine thread that connects all beings.

To begin with He is to be thought of as all the good things that we come across in our daily life. He is the intelligence in wise men; He is the strength in strong men; He is the glory of the glorious.

He is so near us. It should be very easy to realise Him. But there is a mysterious power in this universe. It is called Maya. It has three qualities or states of operation. They are called Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwa is nearest the Lord; it is a state of purity; it elevates us to very nearly the divine state. Rajas is a state of intense activity; but it is almost always mixed either with Sattwa or Tamas. When Rajas is mixed with Sattwa, the activity becomes pure, selfless, and leads us upwards. When it is mixed with Tamas, the activity becomes impure, full of lust, anger and greed. Tamas is a state of inertia—laziness, sleep, etc. Man is constantly ruled by various combinations of these three states. He is under the sway of Maya. Therefore, he is unable to recognise the Lord even though He is so near.

Mind is the inner instrument that you have. You think, contemplate, pray, and even endeavour to understand the nature of the Self, world and God, through your mind only. But the mind itself is subject to the three states of Maya. Man, by his own effort, cannot go beyond these three states. He can at best rise above Tamas and Rajas and fill himself with Sattwa; about that we shall see later. But he cannot entirely become free from all the three states. He has to remain in the state of Sattwa and then pray to God. God will lift him up.

People pray to God for various reasons. Some pray to Him for the fulfilment of their ambitions. Some pray to Him for relief from suffering. Some pray to Him for getting spiritual knowledge. Others—they are very few—pray to Him because He is God! These men of wisdom feel it is natural for their soul to pray to God. They do not want anything; prayer itself gives them the greatest joy and peace. They are the wise men. They have practised Yoga and devotion in countless past births; they have therefore got this desireless devotion to God. They will soon go beyond Maya and attain Him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Life on earth has an end. In a mysterious way our span of life is fixed. When that comes to an end, we could either liberate ourselves once for all or take the way of rebirth. Moksha is liberation from birth and death. The individual soul has no desire, motive or need to come back to the earth. The individual has become one with God. He who has become one with God is not born again. He who is full of desires and who has not actually realised his oneness with God, takes birth again in this world of pain and death.

"As you think, so you become" is perfectly true at the time of death. The next birth will be in accordance with the last thought in this. If you think of God at the time life is to leave the body, you will become one with God.

Man has no control over mind during the last moments of his life here. Extremely rare are the persons who can think properly during the last moments. Who can think of God at the time of death? He who has constantly thought of God when he was alive. Therefore, constantly think of God now itself. Let it become a mental habit. Then you will certainly think of Him at the time of death, too. You will not return to this world of pain and death. You will attain Moksha.

CHAPTER NINE

Who but an Asura will not think of God? God is the creator. It is because of His Omnipotent and Omnipresent Omniscience that Nature functions. These two lines from two verses in this chapter are worth memories:

Pitaahamasya Jagato Maataa Dhaataa
Pitaamahah

I am the Father, Mother, sustainer and Grandfather of this world.

Gatir-Bhartaa Prabhuh Saakshee Nivaasah Saranam Suhrit

(I am) the supreme goal, lord, supporter, witness, abode, refuge, and friend.

It is out of His Supreme Love for us that He even takes human form and lives in our midst. Wise men recognise this. They know that, though God comes into our midst and lives like us, He is not affected by any action. But, fools they are who do not recognise Him.

He who recognises God to be his father, mother, friend, and everything, and who constantly thinks of Him enjoys His unfailing protection. God Himself looks after the devotee in mysterious ways. Our Puranas contain thrilling stories of devotees who have thus been protected by the Lord. They have been saved from great dangers. Incidentally, you come across in the stories of great devotees that they were severely tested, that they had to face great dangers and undergo a lot of suffering. You feel that was unfair. But here is the truth, here is the secret! These sufferings had a twofold purpose. One: they proved that the devotee was unshaken in his faith even by those sufferings. Two: the consequence had always been a miraculous intervention by God, a mysterious protection at the right moment. Be firmly established in your faith. No harm will touch you. Constantly remember God and enjoy His divine protection.

God does not ask of you anything that you cannot do. He does not want you to build temples costing lakhs of rupees, nor to stand on your head for ten years. He wants the devotion of your heart. With devotion, even if you offer Him a flower, leaf, fruit or even water, He is pleased. Therefore, why not offer everything to Him in devotion. Whatever you do, do for His sake. Live for His sake. Feel in your heart and pray: "Lord, I live for You." He is All-pervading. It is Him you serve in your neighbour. It is to Him you give through a needy friend. It is Him you feed through your own mouth. It is for His sake, for the sake of realising Him, that you discipline your mind and senses. Therefore, offer everything to Him. If you do so, you will not be affected by whatever happens to you. You live for His sake. Whatever happens to you is His Will, His Gift. Pleasure or pain, good fortune or misfortune,—everything is His Gift. It would be easy to cut off all attachments and selfish desires.

Everyone can do this. All are equal to Him. Even a sinner can attain Him, if he rightly resolves to cultivate devotion to God. Devotion transforms the sinner into a saint. The path of devotion is open to all. In this world of pain and death, nothing is worth acquiring except devotion. Remember the great utterances of the Lord:

Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Praapya Bhajasva Maam

(Having come into this world which is impermanent and full of suffering, worship Me.)

CHAPTER TEN

To dear Arjuna, Sri Krishna gives a comprehensive description of Himself, that is, of God.

It is not possible for even the gods and great ascetics to know God, by their own effort. They are finite and God is Infinite. It is like your attempt to capture wind with your hands. Mind is a small part; its powers are limited. God is everything, unlimited by nature.

He who really knows God knows that God is the Lord of the Universe, that He is unborn and beginningless. Such a man is freed from sins. Such a man will never commit a sin. Because he will know that God is his own Self.

It is useless to pretend to know that you are God in reality! It is easy to say "I am God"; but difficult to manifest Godliness in your daily life. Therefore, Sri Krishna enumerates all the things that proceed from God.

Discrimination or proper Buddhi. True wisdom. Sane thinking. Forgiveness. Truthfulness. Control over the senses and the mind. Non-violence. Equanimity. Contentment. Austerity. Charity. And a firm conviction that joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolusion, fear and fearlessness, fame and bad reputation, all are God's gifts only.

In fact, God Himself is the creator of everything here. When you clearly grasp this, you will have firm devotion to Him. Then only will you be able to worship God truly and with devotion. Then will you take delight in constantly talking about Him. This in itself is not the goal. This is the way to earn God's Grace. When you thus constantly think of God, He will from within you enlighten your intellect. Then in a mysterious way, you will realise Him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Having heard the glory of correctly understanding God's Divine Nature, Arjuna asks for a detailed catalogue of God's manifestations. Sri Krishna graciously gives the catalogue. The best of everything is God. He is the Self of all. In the end, he says, "I am the gambling of the cheat." Wickedness also is God. That is only to impress on us that there is nothing but God here. That is only to ask you not to hate anybody. But, just as everybody can feel these dots, but only those who know the Braille system can understand their significance, God is common to all, but only the pure at heart can really know Him.

Why do saints and sages describe the glories of God? In order that you will be inspired to see Him face to face. That is what happened to Arjuna. He had heard Sri Krishna describe the Lord's glories. Arjuna therefore prays to Sri Krishna to show him the divine form.

It is not enough merely to understand the divine nature of God. It is not enough if you merely study from books about God. You must see Him face to face. This is God-realisation. You must see Him through your inner eye of intuition, as the all-pervading Divinity.

Sri Krishna reveals a surprising truth. He says: "With your physical eyes you cannot see Me. I will give you the divine eye which alone can see Me." My dear brothers! The loss of physical eye-sight is nothing. Strive to realise God, through your inner eye of intuition. This eye of intuition is blind in the vast majority of people. You can have your inner eye opened more quickly than the others can; for their physical vision drags their mind here and there.

What did Arjuna see? The Virat-Swarupa of God. The description is interesting. It will help you in your meditation.

Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouths and eyes, decked with wonderful divine ornaments, holding many divine weapons, wearing many divine garlands and clothes,—the sight was wonderful, and there was no end to this divine form. He saw that the Great Form contained the whole universe, and extended beyond, too.

Having seen this Great Form, Arjuna trembled with fear. He bursts forth into a beautiful prayer. The Lord tells him a great truth.

God manifests here as Time. Time you know effaces everything. In time, people die. In time, everything is destroyed. In time, everything is forgotten. All that is created marches towards the yawning mouth of Time, to be swallowed by it. It is Time that does everything. We are all instruments in the hands of Time. Realise this. Constantly feel this. Cultivate this Nimitta Bhav. God does everything, through Time. Do your duty in this attitude. You will go beyond Time and become one with God.

What is the foremost qualification for realising God thus? Not study of scriptures, nor hard penance, nor mere charity, nor empty rituals: devotion to God alone is the royal road to God-realisation.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The characteristics of that devotion is described now. It is not possible for everyone to meditate on God without name, without form,—on That which is beyond mind. In the initial stages, everyone should meditate on some form. Constantly meditating on that Form, with supreme faith, the greatest among devotees are ever intent on doing good to all. Notice here that the devotee is not an idler. He is ever busy in the service of all; for God alone is manifest here as everything.

But all actions should be offered as worship of God.

Then God will raise you up from this world of birth and death and enable you to realise Him.

If you cannot thus meditate upon God constantly, then try to practise this Yoga. You will in due time be fixed in God. If you are not able to practise either, do all activities for His sake alone. If even this you are not able to do, then do your duty; but be indifferent to the reward of your actions. Then, step by step, you will reach the highest rung in the ladder of Yoga.

What are the characteristics of a devotee?

He does not hate anybody. He is friendly to all. He is compassionate. He is egoless. He does not regard anything as his. He is unaffected by pain and pleasure. He is patient. He is contented. He is firm in his convictions. He has given his mind to the Lord. He is not afraid of anyone; nor is anyone afraid of him. He is not given to hilarity, depression or fear. He is desireless. He is pure. He is clever. He does not feel he does anything. He has no friend nor enemy. He is not affected by heat and cold. He does not crave for company. He is not affected by praise or censure. Such is the devotee who is dear to God. May you shine as such a devotee here and now.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Devotion leads to wisdom. Knowledge of God is the ultimate goal. Supreme devotion is itself Jnana or highest Knowledge. Ordinarily, you know for knowledge there is a subject and an object. You are the subject. The thing that you know is the object.

The object is the field of knowledge—Kshetram. The subject is the knower of the field—Kshetrajna. In philosophy, the Kshetrajna is God. He and He alone really knows. Everything else is the object.

All your organs, the whole body, all the objects of the world, your mind, intellect and the ego—all these are objects. The spark of God in you is the knower of these objects.

If the mind, intellect and ego are all objects and only

God who dwells in the heart is the subject, what is Jnana then? What the mind or intellect does cannot be Jnana!

Lord Krishna gives a significant definition of Jnana. Jnana cannot be defined as knowledge of this or that. Krishna says: "Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service of the spiritual preceptor, purity of mind and body, tenacity, self-control, disgust for worldly enjoyments, egolessness, contemplation of the pain of birth, death, old age and diseases, freedom from attachment to son, wife, home, etc., and a balanced mind in pleasure and pain, etc., unflinching devotion to God, living in seclusion and in holy places, being established in the knowledge of Atma, seeing God in all,—this is Jnana. What is not this, even if it means knowledge of all scriptures in the world, is ignorance only!"

What is worth knowing here? It is the all-pervading God. He is within and without all beings. He is extremely subtle. Therefore, He is not easily known. He is seated in our heart.

Jnaanam Jneyam Jnaanagamyam Hridi Sarvasya Tishtitam

He is Jnana. He is to be known. He is the goal of Jnana. He is seated in your heart. To know Him is the supreme end of life.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The three Gunas or modes of Nature are discussed in detail in this chapter. They are, as we have already seen, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. All the three bind the individual to this world.

Sattwa is wisdom: not Atma-Jnana but wisdom of every other type. Rajas is activity based on desires and attachment. Tamas is dullness, sleep and inertia.

Sattwa leads to happiness. Rajas leads to action. Tamas leads to delusion and error.

These three qualities of Nature alternate each other in the mind of man. One quality alone cannot prevail for all time.

If a man dies when Sattwa prevails in him, he goes to heaven, etc. If he dies when Rajas predominates in him, he is reborn among those who are active. Death while Tamas is prevalent leads to rebirth among stupid creatures.

Sattwic actions yield the fruits of happiness, wisdom, dispassion and other auspicious qualities. Rajasic actions lead to sorrow. Tamas can lead to nothing but ignorance.

He who transcends these three Gunas, attains Immortality. He alone realises the Self. He is a sage. He knows that the entire creation is sustained by the three Gunas. He has realised that the Self is beyond these three, and that it is a witness He constantly dwells in God. He goes beyond the Gunas. He is liberated from birth and death.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The universe is like a tree upside down. It has its roots above. God is the root of the universe. Then it grows downwards. Nourished by the three Gunas, the tree grows into vast proportions. Sense-enjoyments are like the leaves of this great tree. Can you count them? Even so there is no end to sense-enjoyment. You can never find satisfaction in it. With the sword of dispassion and detachment you have to cut this tree. Detach yourself from the branches and leaves.

Be established in the root, viz., God. Constantly repeat to yourself:

Tameva Cha Adyam Purusham Prapadye
Yatah Pravrittih Prasrutaa Puraance

"I take refuge in that First Purusha, God, from whom all these objects have come."

It is possible thus to attain that Supreme State. For, the Jivatma, individual soul, is a part of God. Because it is attached to the mind and body, it is limited. When this attachment is cut, it realises its identity with the all-pervading God. The individual soul when it is connected to the mind and senses enjoys through them. This is the secret truth. It is the individual soul, the God in your heart, who digests the food and performs all other vital functions.

The bodies are perishable. The individual soul is imperishable. Beyond both these is the Supreme Purusha, God, Who is all-pervading and Who maintains everything in the universe. Therefore, worship the Lord, feeling that the divinity within you is God's own manifestation. In time you will realise Him, become one with Him, and attain Liberation.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Now you have an idea of the glory of God. You have an idea of the glory of Self-realisation. You know it is the goal of your life here. You know, too, that Self-realisation is to become one with God.

To become one with God, you have to become divine first. You have to cultivate divine virtues. You have to eradicate all undivine qualities.

What are the divine qualities to be cultivated?

Fearlessness, absolute purity of heart, constant contemplation on God, charity, control of the senses, self-sacrificing service, study of scriptures, leading a simple austere life, straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, spirit of renunciation, peacefulness, refraining from gossiping, sympathy, absence of attachment to the objects of senses, mildness, modesty, abstaining from idle pursuits, acquiring spiritual radiance, forgiveness, endurance, purity of body, absence of malice, humility,—all these are divine qualities to be cultivated.

What are the undivine qualities to be eradicated?

Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness and ignorance. These are the qualities of an Asura. Lord Krishna gives a clear description of an Asura. He does not know what is right and what is wrong. He is impure. He does not know how to behave. He is untruthful. He denies God. He is cruel. He is always planning and scheming. He thinks that the goal of life is sensual enjoyment here. He is bound by a thousand desires and attachments. He earns and hoards money by unlawful means. He thinks he is the lord of everything, and no one is equal to him. He is arrogant and fond of name and fame. He is far, far away from God. He is worse than an animal. Therefore, he is reborn in lower orders of creation.

Remember:

Trividham Narakasyedam Dwaaram Naasanamaatmanah
Kaamah Krodhastathaa Lobhastasmaadetatrayam Tyajet.

Renounce lust, anger and greed which are the gates to hell.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The method of cultivating divine qualities is given in this chapter. You already know that out of the three Gunas, Sattwa is the Guna which helps the growth of wisdom and of divinity. It is nearest God. To become divine, therefore, you should increase the Sattwa in you.

How is that done?

The Lord gives the essential classification of everything into Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic. You can choose the Sattwic in all and thus grow in Sattwa.

The Sattwic man worships God. The Rajasic man worships powerful demons. The Tamasic man worships ghosts. Therefore, worship God.

The food that promotes longevity, intelligence, strength, health, happiness and delight, sweet, nourishing and agreeable is Sattwic. Food which is bitter, acid, very hot, pungent, and burning is Rajasic. Half-cooked food, putrid, stale or polluted is Tamasic. Eat Sattwic food.

The sacrifice that is prescribed by scriptures is Sattwic if it is performed without selfish desires. A showy performance is Rajasic sacrifice. The sacrifice which is not prescribed by scriptures, and during which no charity is performed, is Tamasic. Perform Sattwic sacrifice.

Penance receives a new definition in the hands of the Lord. He discourages foolish penance or austerity in which the man tortures himself, that is the spark of God within him. Worship of God, Brahmins and elders, purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-violence—these are auterities of the body. Unoffensive, truthful, agreeable and wholesome speech, study of scriptures and repetition of the Divine Name

—these are the austerities of speech. Cheerfulness of mind, serenity, habit of meditation on God—these are austerities of the mind. Even in these three kinds of austerities, there are the Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

The austerity performed, with supreme faith, by the Yogi who is desireless, is Sattwic. Austerity performed for the purpose of acquiring name and fame, and in which the man is not steady, is Rajasic. The austerity performed without understanding, by an Asuric man, with much torture of the body, is Tamasic. Perform Sattwic austerity of the body, speech and mind.

Charity done with no expectation of reward but with the feeling it is your duty to do charity, is Sattwic. When you do charity with the idea of getting some reward for it, it is Rajasic. The charity performed in an insulting manner is Tamasic. Perform Sattwic charity.

Commence all your actions with the utterance of the Mantra: "Om Tat Sat." This is the designation of the Supreme Lord.

Thus would you grow in Sattwa and become divine.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Under no circumstances should service, charity and austerity be renounced. Renunciation which leads to Liberation, is renunciation of selfish actions. Duty performed without feeling "I am doing this," without desire or prejudice, by one who does not expect any reward for it, is Sattwic. Actions performed with expectation of some reward is Rajasic. The action which is meant to harm others is Tamasic. Always choose Sattwic action.

The Buddhi or intelligence which discriminates between right and wrong, what is fear and what is fearlessness, what is bondage and what is liberation—is Sattwic. The Buddhi which does not understand what is right and wrong—is Rajasic. The Buddhi which takes the wrong to be right and vice versa—is Tamasic. Cultivate Sattwic Buddhi.

In tenacious adherence, too, there are three types. The unswerving firmness by which one practises meditation, controls the mind, Prana and senses, is Sattwic. The firmness with which a man who is full of desires holds to the three Purusharthas—Dharma (virtue), Artha (prosperity) and Kama (pleasure)—is Rajasic. The firmness which makes a fool fling to sleep, fear, despondency and arrogance, is Tamasic. Choose the Sattwic firmness in everything.

That happiness is Sattwic which, though unpleasant in the beginning, leads to great good in the end: spiritual practices fall in this category. Sensual happiness which appears to be pleasant in the beginning, but which proves poisonous in the end, is Rajasic. The happiness that is characterised by inertia, delusion in the beginning, delusion in the middle, delusion in the end—is Tamasic. Seek Sattwic happiness.

To sum up.

Cultivate pure reason or intelligence or Buddhi. Take Sattwic food. Live in a holy place. Renounce sense-enjoyment. Restrain the mind and senses. Control body, mind and speech. Be dispassionate. Constantly contemplate on God. Abandon egoism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and greed. Give up 'I'-ness and 'mine'-ness. You will become one with God. Then you will never grieve. You will never be worried by desires. You will look upon all beings as the One Self. You will have supreme devotion to God. You will know

Him. Performing your duties, for the good of the world, you will eventually attain His Abode.

The two great stanzas that conclude the Lord's instruction to Arjuna are worth being inscribed on the tablet of your heart. Remember them always:

Manmanaa Bhava Madbhakto Madyaajee Maam Namaskuru

Maamevaishyasi Satyam Te Pratijaane Priyosi-me

"Fix your mind on God. Be devoted to God. Worship God. You will doubtless attain God. This is His promise.

Sarvadharmaan Parityajya Maamekam Saranam Vraja
Aham Twaa Sarvapaapebhyo Mokshyishyaami Maa Suchah

Do total self-surrender. Surrender all your duties to Him. Take refuge in God. He will absolve you of all sins. Grieve not.

CONCLUSION

Thus ends the discourse of Lord Krishna considered an incarnation of God Himself. Arjuna had understood the nature of God, world and man. His delusion had vanished. He had actually seen that God Himself, who as Time, devoured all those who were on the battle-field. He was only required to fight as an instrument of God. He stood up to fight.

Sanjaya rejoices that he was given the supreme privilege of listening through clairaudience to the Lord's discourse. He asserts that where there is Krishna and where there is Arjuna, there will ever be fame, prosperity, victory, and firm righteousness.

Yatra Yogeshwarah Krishno Yatra Paartho Dhanurdharah
Tatra Srih Vijayo Bhutih Dhruvaa Neetir Matir Mama.

Thus ends the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred scripture. It shows you the way to go beyond grief. It enables you to conquer sorrow and suffering. Above all, it transforms your heart. It will make a real man of you. By and by, you will grow in divinity and attain God-realisation. That is the goal. Practise the teachings contained in the Gita and become perfect. You will shine as saints and sages.

May the choicest blessings of the Lord be upon you all!

THE BEAUTIES OF THE RAMAYANA: by his Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda. Published by the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, Rishikesh. Price Rs. 3. 00.

This is a very well-got up version of the Ramayana in English free verse which has a sustained simplicity and beauty as much associated with the epic as it is the result of the inspired labours of a Sahridaya. Swami Sivananda has become an individualised institution or institutionalised individual in the peculiar tradition of Hindu Dharma. It has one foot in this world, another foot in the heavens and his spirit is trying to spread throughout the Universe in responsive urge to the call of the immanent and the transcendant. This is something peculiarity *sui generis* to our land and our knight-errants of the spirit.

Swami Sivananda's labours are as versatile as they are prodigious. From a cure for tooth-ache to the expounding of the mystery of the Sutra Tatvamasi, he is ready to oblige both the devout chelas and the unheeding public at large. For, it is part of the Hindu way of life to wait patiently for the moment of illumination, taking care to be responsive all along the line.

The present version of the epic is prefaced by a few essays dealing with its artistic, didactic and philosophic appeals couched in a style of delightful simplicity and with an awareness of its abiding strong points. The verse patterns in which the entire story is narrated also testify to a sense of music and rhythm which transplant into English the clarities and euphonies of Sanskrit verse summaries of the great epic. No single incident of importance is omitted and yet the story proceeds briskly, cogently and with a momentum gathered from itself.

As an epitome of a national epic, the present English version may be commended to all. The grown-ups who have read or heard it in extenso will have their memories and associations roused by single words or phrases, while the young may make their first acquaintance with Rama's life-story in simple English.

—*Sunday Times, Madras,*
8-6-1958.

EQUIPMENT FOR A JNANA YOGI

An aspirant who treads the path of Jnana should possess a sharp, subtle, pure, one-pointed and calm intellect. Then alone he can attain Self-realisation.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

PARA BHAKTI

Worship God as your own Self or Atma. This is highest Bhakti. This is Vedantic Bhakti. This is Abheda Upasana.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

VEDANTA FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

Love your children as your own Atma. This will destroy Moha, infatuation or delusion, the cause for bondage. You will have pure love for your children.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

CONTENTS

Pages
1. Publishers' Tribute iii
2. Sri P.S. Subramanya Iyer v
3. Why Swami Sivananda is Respected and Loved Most (*Sri Indrajit Sharma, M.A.*) vi
4. Introduction viii
5. Prayers xiii
    (i) To the Guru xv
    (ii) To Lord Siva xvi
    (iii) To Lord Krishna xviii
    (iv) To Lord Rama xxi
    (v) To Mother xxiii
    (vi) Vedantic Prayer xxvii
    (vii) Universal Prayer—I xxxiii
    (viii) Universal Prayer—II xxxiv
6. Bhagavad Gita for the Blind xxxv

Chapter One: UNIVERSE

1. Creation and Evolution 3
2. What is This World 12
3. Theory of Rebirth 19
4. What is Death and How to Conquer It 23
5. Moksha 28

Chapter Two: HINDUISM

1. Hinduism 33
2. True Religion 35
3. Glory of Mother India 38

Chapter Three: GURU AND DISCIPLE

1. Necessity for a Guru 43

Pages

2. Guru and Disciple 47
3. Qualifications of Aspirants 52
4. Sanchita, Purushartha and Prarabdha Karmas 58

Chapter Four: GOD AND AVATARA

1. Saguna and Nirguna Aspects of God 67
2. Attributes of God 76
3. The Grace of the Lord 80
4. Cause for the Descent of Avatara 86
5. Idol Worship 88
6. Manasic Pooja 95

Chapter Five: BHAKTI YOGA

1. What is Bhakti? 99
2. Different Kinds of Bhakti 108
3. Bhav in Bhakti 111
4. Para Bhakti 113
5 Develop Cosmic Love 120
6. Who is a Devotee? 125

Chapter Six: HOW TO DEVELOP BHAKTI

1. How to Develop Bhakti 129
2. Faith in God 145
3. Prayer 149
4 Namaskar 152
5. Importance of Sankirtan 154
6. Charity 158
7. Satsang 164
8. Saranagati (Surrender) 167

Chapter Seven: JAPA YOGA

1. Japa, the Easy Sadhana 173

Pages
2. Mantras for Japa 176
3. Ajapa Japa 178
4. Likhita Japa 179
5. Benefits of Japa 180
6. Constant Japa with Bhava Needed 183

Chapter Eight: KARMA YOGA

1. Necessity for Karma Yoga 187
2. Varieties of Karma Yoga 192
3. Practice of Karma Yoga 196

Chapter Nine: MAYA

1. What is Maya? 209
2. Avidya 213
3. Ahankara 215

Chapter Ten: BRAHMA VIDYA

1. The Three States 228
2. Brahma Vidya (Jnana) 238
3. Adhyasa (Superimposition) 242

Chapter Eleven: VEDANTA

1. Vedanta Philosophy 251
2. Teachings of Vedanta 265
3. Unity in Diversity 272
4. Glory of Vedanta 278
5. Practice of Vedanta 281
6. Meditation in Vedanta 296

Chapter Twelve: JNANA YOGA

1. What is Brahman? 307

Pages
2. Nature of Brahman 312
3. Vedantic Lore 316
4. Vedanta and Other Schools 321
5. Tattwas 323
6. Students of Brahma Vidya 325
7. Peace in Politics 329
8. Hints for Aspirants 331

Chapter Thirteen: JIVANMUKTA

1. Jivanmukta 341
APPENDIX 357
STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA 365

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Chapter One

UNIVERSE

1. CREATION AND EVOLUTION

In the beginning Brahman who is one without a second alone exists. When darkness was rolling over darkness, there was existence alone. Nobody knows how this universe came into being. You will find in Rig Veda: "Who knows here, who can here state whence came all this multifarious Univers? Even the Devas are posterior to its creation, who then knows whence this came out? (Rig Veda VIII-17—6).

Hiranyagarbha or the first-born or the golden egg. Sutratma, Karya Brahman are other names for Brahma, the creative aspect of the Lord. Sutratma means thread-soul. Hiranyagarbha pervades all beings like the thread in a garland of flowers. Hence the name Sutratma. "All this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a string." (Gita—Chapter VII—7). Hiranyagarbha is Karya Brahman. Ishwar is Karana Brahman. Karana means cause. Karya means effect. Hiranyagarbha is born of Ishwar.

Some hold that the universe was created out of nothing by a fiat of God and that it will again lapse into nothing at the period of deluge. This dogma of creation *ex nihilo* is not endorsed by scientists. They say emphatically that what exists now should have existed always and will continue to exist always in some form or other. In Sankhya philosophy also you will find: "That which is cannot come out of "That which is not." (Sankhya Sutra 78). Gita also states: "There can be no existence out of non-existence, nor can the existent cease to be. The truth about both has been perceived by seers." (Chapter II—16).

Something cannot come out of nothing. Something can come out of something only.

Unconscious matter cannot be the ultimate cause of the universe. It is Jada. An omniscient Ishwar only, who can have an orderly arrangement, can be the Creator of this universe.

An effect does not exist apart from its cause. For instance, a pot does not exist apart from clay, its material cause. Similarly, this universe does not exist apart from Brahman, its material cause. It has no independent existence. It is one with Brahman. Brahman alone exists. This world is a mere appearance. When one gets knowledge of the Self, this world vanishes, just as the snake vanishes when one cognises the real rope by bringing a lamp.

Ishwara wills. The equilibrium of the Gunas is disturbed through Kala under the influence of Ishwara. Kala is a Shakti of Ishwara. Then transformation takes place through Swabhava, which is the essence of Prakriti. The development of the Mahat Tattwa follows from Karma. Originally this world was enveloped in darkness. Ishwara or the Lord, though unmanifest Himself, caused this universe to be gradually manifested. By dint of His Will, the Lord, the undecaying substratum or reality of the universe gave the first impetus to Nature to shake off her state of primal equipose and to be gradually and successfully evolved in those twenty-four categories and elements such as intellect, egoism, root-elements or Tanmatras, Prana, Mind, the five Bhutas or elements which were necessary for the formation of the present universe.

The subtler the element, the more powerful it is. Water is more powerful than the Earth, because it is more subtle than the earth. Water removes away earth. Fire is more powerful than the water, because it is more subtle than the water. Fire dries up all water. Air is more powerful than fire because it is more subtle than fire. Air blows up the fire. Ether or Akasa is more powerful than air because it is more subtle than air. The air rests in Akasa. Akasa is the support for the air. Air is born of Akasa, fire is born of air, water is born of fire, earth is born of water. During cosmic Pralaya, earth is reduced or involved into the water, water into the fire, fire into the air and air into the Akasa.

Now I will describe the evolution of the gross world. The five Tanmatras are divided into two equal parts. With a half of one element is mixed one-eighth of each of the other elements. A five-fold combination takes place. The five gross elements are formed now. This is the process of Pancheekarana or quintuplication. When the Tanmatras are in the original state without being mixed with one another, they are called Apancheekrita or non-quintuplicated five elements. The whole world, the four kinds of gross bodies of four kinds of beings viz., Udbhijja or seed-born, Swedaja or born of sweat, oviparous or born of egg and viviparous or born of placenta, and all objects of enjoyment are formed out of the five gross quintuplicated elements. The physical body of the human beings is called Annamaya Kosha. The Jiva experiences the waking state with this body.

The process of Pancheekarana (quintuplication) is as follows: Each of the five rudimentary elements (Tanmatras) of earth, water, fire, air, ether is divided into two parts. One of the halves is further divided into four parts. Then each gross element is formed by the union of one half of itself (Tanmatra) with one-eighth of each of the other four Tanmatras. Then the gross Brahmanda and physical bodies are formed.

Now I shall proceed to describe the evolution of the subtle world. Ishwara willed and the Tamoguna became divided into Avarana Shakti (veiling power) and Vikshepa Shakti (projecting power). On account of this veiling power man is not able to realise his original Sat-chit-ananda nature.He is not able to realise his original Sat-chit-ananda nature. He is not Koshas. The projecting power has projected this universe. FromVikshepa Shakti the subtle Akasa was born; form Akasa, Vayu; from Vayu, fire; from fire, water; and from water, earth. These five subtle elements which are un-quintuplicated are called the Tanmatras or root-elements. These root-elements contain the three Gunas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. From the Sattwic portion of Akasa, the ear, the organ of hearing is formed; from Vayu, the organ of touch or the skin; form fire, the eye; from water, the tongue; and from the earth, the nose. The Antahkarana is formed from the sum-total of Sattwa of these five Tanmatras. The Antahkarana is four-fold viz., mind, intellect, Chitta and Ahankara. Chitta comes under mind and Ahankara under intellect.

According to Kapila Muni, the founder of Sankhya philosophy, the Tri-gunatmic Prakriti, consisting of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas is the cause for this world. According to Nyaya philosophy, Ishwara (Nitya Jnana Iccha Prayatnavam) is the efficient cause of this world. Vaiseshikas of the Kanada school of thought hold that Paramanus are the material cause. According to Patanjali's Yoga philosophy, Visesha Purusha (Ishwara) who is not touched by Klesha Karma, Vipaka, Ashaya is the efficient cause of this world. Karma (Dharmas and Adharmas) is the cause for this world according to Jaimini (Mimamsic school). According to Vedanta the reflection of Shuddha Chaitanya in Maya is Ishwara. Maya Sabalita Chaitanya is the Abhinna—Nimittopadana Karan for this world.

Kalavadins say that all this has time for its root. Time is everything. Time is God. Time indeed is the seed of the universe. It is time again that withdraws everything at its pleasure. But time is Jada. Time is a drop in eternity. Eternity is Brahman.

Kshanik-Vijnana-vadins say: "There is only Vijnana. The world is mere idea. It is only the idea that appears as objects." Sunyavadins deny objects as well as the Vijnana.

The three elements, earth, water and fire are termed Murta (with form) and air and ether Amurta (formless).

On account of the heat of summer the earth if scorched up. The earth becomes fallow, but the roots of vegetation remain underground. During the rainy season all the roots germinate again with full vigour. Even so when the previous creation is burnt up by the fires of Pralaya, the roots of the tree of Samsara remain imbedded in Avyaktam or Prakriti. When the next Kalpa begins, the roots again germinate, creation begins and the whole world is again projected.

Srishti or creation is of two kinds viz., Yugapat Srishti and Karma Srishti. In Yugapat Srishti, the five elements, Mahat, Ahankar, etc., and other objects of the universe come into being at one time i.e. simultaneously. In Karma Srishti, the elements come out one by one. From Avyaktam is born Mahat; from Mahat, Ahankar, etc., from Akasa, Vayu is born; from Vayu, fire, etc. There is creation in succession.

Sri Vasishtha told Sri Rama: "At one period, all the universe Siva creates; at another period, Brahma; at another period, Vishnu; then Munis and so on. Sometimes Brahma is born in a lotus; sometimes in water; sometimes in a mundanc egg; sometimes in Akasa. In one creation the powerful trees alone will exist in this universe; in another the earth alone; in another the stones alone; in another flesh alone; and in another creation, gold alone. Thus it will be in diverse ways. During the several creations, the foremost is sometimes the Akas, sometimes Vayu, sometimes Agni, sometimes Apas and sometimes Prithvi. Herein I have but briefly described to you the creation of one Brahma. The order of evolution will not be the same in all Yugas, but will vary with the different Yugas. Krita and other Yugas will again and again recur. There is no object in this world which does not again and again cycle round many times."

As from blazing fire, sparks, all similar to one another, come forth in thousands, so also from the imperishable Brahman various types of beings are born and they also return back to Brahman.

As the web issues from the spider, as little sparks proceed from fire, so also from the one soul proceed all breathing animals, all worlds, all the gods and all beings. (Brihad. Upa. II-1-20).

Avinasi tu tad viddhi yena sarvamidam tatam
Vinasamavyayasyasya na Kaschit Kartumarhati

"But know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That, the Inexhaustible". (Gita II-17).

The universe in all its stages is never apart from Brahman. The grass comes out of the earth and is absorbed into the earth. Even so this universe comes out of Brahman, rests in Brahman and dissolves in Brahman.

Atman is homogeneous. World (Prakriti) is heterogeneous. Atman is one. Manifestation (Nature) is many. One has become many. One is real. Many are unreal and illusory.

Through the help of a powerful telescope you can bring the moon to a distance of 75 miles and photograph the mountains that are seen there to a height of 20,000 feet. Temperatures of other planets are recorded. Experiments like these are very interesting. Study of Astronomy and practical researches are very inspiring. They bring the student in tune with the Lord or Creator. But still more inspiring is the study of Atman or Highest Self. All the planets, stars, satellites hang or float in that mysterious Atman. He is the source or Yoni (womb) for all Solar systems. Glory, glory to the Lord of Lords.

If you attain knowledge of the Self, the meaning of life will cease to be a mystery. You will clearly understand the why and how of this universe. The purpose and progress in the scheme of things will become clear to you. All the transcendental things will be known to you like the apple in the palm of your hand.

In Brahman there was a Spandan or vibration before the world was projected. This is the Sankalpa of Brahman. He thought or willed: "*Ekoham bahusyam*—I am one; may I become many". This vibration corresponds to the bulging of the seed within the ground when it is soaked with water. Then the whole world was projected.

Brahman creates this unthinkable universe through his illusive power of Maya with three Gunas for his own Leela (sporting). But these activities do not touch Him in the least. He is Asanga, Nirlipta (unattached) like ether. This world floats in Him like a log of wood in the ocean.

When an ordinary, meagre juggler can bring forth mangoes, fruits, money, sweetmeals, an imaginary palace, etc., through Indrajala or Sammohana Vidya, can He (the Omnipotent, omniscient Ruler) not create this insignificant world for His own play? When a mortal King adorns his palace with furniture, pictures, curios, garden, fountain, etc., can He not furnish this world with beautiful landscape, brilliant sun, moon and stars, mighty rivers and oceans?

If you can create countless dream-pictures and give them light and life also during dream, if you can possess such powers can the Lord not have omnipotence, omniscience, etc?

A famous Harley-Street specialist Professor A.M. Low has discovered a liquid which, he claims, can guarantee the sex of any child before birth. He claims a 90 per cent successful result from his experiments. He has worked on the theory that all parents have either male or female reproductive tendencies. According to Professor Low, the liquid which he has invented after years of research acts on these tendencies to ensure either a male or female birth. These inventions are very amazing indeed. But still more amazing is the eternal soul, the basis for inventions and discoveries, theories and hypothesis, the basis for the energy and the life of a scientist, the basis for cosmic energy. The scientist is able to work in his laboratory, through the light of his eternal soul. His mind cannot work, his eyes cannot see without this soul. This soul is Mind of minds, Prana of pranas, Ear of ears and Eye of eyes. Let Professor Low try to discover this Eternal Soul now.

The Upanishads or Srutis are authoritative. They will guide you. They will inspire and elevate you. You must have unshakable faith in their teachings. Then only you will be saved from the clutches of Maya or death. Do not destroy them by means of your sophisticated reasoning. The intellect is a frail and finite instrument. Do not depend upon your intellect alone. If you do so, there is no hope for attaining immortality.

'What is the purpose of God's creating this world?'—This is a transcendental question or Atiprasna. You will konw the purpose only when you attain God-consciouusness. The finite mind that is conditioned in time, space and causation cannot get an answer for a question that relates to transcendal matters.

You simply waste your energy and time by entering into hot discussions regarding the question 'Why God created this world? Is the world real or unreal?' It would matter nothing to you whether the world be real or not. You will not gain anything substantial by entering into such controversies. You will have to dive deep into the chamber of your heart by withdrawing the mind and the out-going senses to rest in the Supreme Self. Give up, therefore, these useless discussions and proceed straightaway in the quest of the Self and its realisation. Instead of counting the number of the leaves in a tree, try to eat the fruits directly. Try to enjoy the Eternal Bliss of the Self by realisation. This is wisdom.

If you attain knowledge of the Self, the meaning of life will cease to be a mystery. You will clearly understand the 'why' and 'how' of this universe. The purpose and progress in the scheme of things will become clear to you. Through regular spiritual Sadhana attain the Knowledge of the Self.

2. WHAT IS THIS WORLD

It is the mind that has given shape, colour, and taste to an orange. For a scientist an orange is a mass of electrons or atoms. For a student of Vaiseshika school of thought, it is a combination of Anu. For a clairvoyant it is a collection of Tanmatras. For a Jivanmukta or a sage it is Brahman. There is some defect in the lens of your eyes and so you see the external objects. If your inner eye of wisdom is opened, the same orange is perceived as Brahman only, this world is cognised as Brahman only. This world is mere illusion. It is mere appearance like snake in the rope. If the world is a reality, it must appear to you in deep sleep also.

This vast sense-universe shines as Atma Sankalpa. If there is mind only there will be this universe. There is no mind during deep sleep. So there is no world. The more you think of the objects, the more this world will appear to you as real. The conception of the reality of the universe will increase if you think of sense objects often and often.

It is only the waking state that brings before us this creation. The waking state is only the projection of the mind and hence it is Maya or transcient. If the universe is everlasting, it must exist in our experience during deep sleep state. When the mind is free from Sankalpas, there is no universe. The universe does not exist in deep sleep state.

In deep sleep state you have no experience of the world, because there is no mind. This clearly shows that there will be world if there is mind only and that the mind alone creates this world. That is the reason why Srutis declare that this world is Manomatra Jagat, Manah Kalpita Jagat.

Time is a mode of the mind. Time is a mental creation.

Time is a trick or jugglery of the mind. Time is an illusion. Brahman is beyond time. It is eternity. There is local time. If it is 12 at Madras, it is 12-23 p.m. at Calcutta, 1 p.m. at Rangoon, 1-30 p.m. at Singapore, 6-30 p.m. at London, 12-30 a.m. at Chicago, 1-30 a.m. at New York. What is all this? There is no uniformity. Does not this indicate that time is a creation of the mind. Go beyond time and rest in the timeless, eternal, imperishable Brahman.

To-morrow becomes to-day and to-day becomes yesterday. Future becomes present and the present becomes past. What is all this? This is a creation or trick of the mind only. In Ishwara everything is present only, everything is here only. Brahman is beyond time.

There is neither day nor night, neither yesterday nor tomorrow in the sun. The mind has created time and space. When you are happy, time passes away quickly; when you are unhappy, time is lingering on you. This is a relative world only. The theory of relativity by Einstin throws much light on the nature of Maya and this world.

A magician throws up a rope in the sky, climbs to the sky through it and disappears. After five minutes he falls down on the ground dead, with shattered limbs. After another five minutes the same magician stands before you. Now tell me whether the death of the magician is real or false. You have perceived the phenomenon with your own eyes. So is the tangibility of matter and of the sense-contact.

If you are in Allahabad for a month, you forget all about your native place, Madras, your friends and relatives. You create a new world of your own at Allahabad. When you come back to Madras, you forget all about Allahabad. It is only the mind that creates a wrold. If you slay this mind which creates the illusion, there will be no world for you.

Through the trick of the mind one furlong appears to be a great distance and three miles appear as a very short distance. You ought to have noted this in your daily life.

In Samadhi or super-conscious state wherein there is annihilation of the mind, there is no world. Just as the snake in the rope vanishes when a lamp is brought, so also this world which is mere appearance or super-imposition does not exist when one attains illumination, when the sun of knowledge dawns.

The world is nothing but sex and ego. Ego is the chief thing. It is the basis. The sex is hanging on the ego. If the ego is destroyed by Vichara or enquiry of 'who am I?', the sex-idea will take to its heels by itself. Man, master of the destiny, has lost his divine glory and has become a slave a tool in the hands of sex and ego on acount of ignorance. Sex and ego are the products of Avidya or nescience. The dawn of spiritual knowledge of the Self will annihilate these two enemies of Atma, the two dacoits who are plundering the helpless, ignorant, little false Jiva, the illusory 'I.'

World is Parinama Nitya (changing eternal). Brahman is Kutastha Nitya (unchanging eternal).

World is Satyam (in a relative sense). Brahman is Satyasya Satyam (truth of truth). World is Vyavaharic-Satta (empirical reality). Brahman is Paramarthic-Satta (absolute reality). Dream-creatures are Pratibhasic-Satta.

A Paricchinna (finite) thing is always Anitya (non-eternal). Is this not your daily experience in life? Brahman or Atma which is the essence of mind, body and Indriyas is Aparicchinna (infinite), Nitya (eternal). Realise Atma, therefore, by singing OM. All miseries will terminate. You can become a Dattatreya or Sankara.

This world is not Atyanta Mithya. This is Mithya. But in what sense? Is it as unreal as the horn of a hare or a barren woman's son or a lotus in the sky? No. It is not as muuch as a solid reality as Brahman is. When compared with Brahman, it is unreal. It is mere appearance. That is Mithya. Do you clearly understand the point now, dear Chandra? Do not make mistakes in future about the term Mithya. The wrong conception of the word 'Mithya' has brought severe havoc in the minds of the Hindus. It has brought ignoble inertia and stagnation in the minds of the people of India and in the majority of Sannyasins too.

Even if you take the world as Sat, you can keep up certainly, as a matter of course, your position of Kevala Adwaita of Sri Sankara. You need not deviate even a fraction of an inch. Bear this in mind. Just as heat and luminosity cannot bring duality to fire, so also this world cannot bring duality to Brahman. But how can appearance affect Reality?

This world is Anadi or beginningless. Karma is also Anadi. The path of Karma is mysterious. Get knowledge of the Self. The mystery of Karma will be revealed unto you.

Some say that this is a bad world as there is much pain, sorrow and temptation. But if you do noble deeds, if you practise Japa and meditation, you can attain eternal bliss. This bad world will become a sweet and lovely paradise for you. Do not blame the world but blame your mind. Correct and educate your mind. You will have a changed vision of this world.

There is only one Truth—God and there is nothing else.

This world is His manifestation. All activities, happenings and doings are His. All is He. This world is ephemeral and a passing show,a phenomena only for a time. There is no individual existence. The individuality is simply imaginary and an ignorant condition of the mind.

There is number two, because there is number one. If you start counting one from the little finger, the thumb will be number five; if you begin to count from the thumb, the thumb will become the number one and the little finger will be number five. One becomes five and five becomes one. One, two, three, etc., are relative figures only. There must be an unchanging, real permanent substratum for this appearance. That substratum is Brahman or your own Self. In reality there is neither two nor three. There is only existence or Truth or Brahman.

The world is subject to the ever recurent periods of activity and passivity known as Kalpa and Pralaya or day and night.

Practically there is no death for anything. There is active life in a piece of stone or block of wood. The atoms, molecules, electrons vibrate and rotate with a tremendous velocity.

There is a difference between a Nireeshwara Vadi and a Nastika. Nireeshwara Vadi is one who denies the existence of Ishwara (Ishwara Satta). The followers of Kapila Muni are Nireeshawara Vadins. Nastika is one who says that there is no soul independent of the body and that the body alone is the soul. He further states that the Soul is formed by the combination of betel and Chunam (lime). Charvakas belong to this cult. They state that the soul perishes after the death or disintegration of body.

An agnostic is not an atheist. He only says that God is unknowable.

According to the nebulor theory, every solar system was in the beginning a huge mass of gaseous matter which filled all space and which was rotating in its own axis. As ages rolled on, the gaseous matter attained the igneous stage. The central portion contracted. The mass rotated very rapidly and threw off rings on the outer side, which gradually cooled down and formed into planets. These planets were in a molten or liquid condition for a protracted period. Gradually they cooled down and became solid.

This world appears as Brahman for a sage, as Lord for a Bhakta, as a mass of energy or electrons for a scientist.

There are only electric vibrations outside. There are only electrons in this world. Everything is electricity, different frequency and different wave-lengths of vibrations. This is the theory of the scientists.

The energy that is contained in a handful of dust, when liberated, can blow up a mountain. This is the theory of modern scientists. They are attempting to demonstrate this by experiment.

The scientist bombards the atoms, watches the movement of the electrons in his laboratory, spends his whole life in understanding the nature and secret of matter and energy, invents many things, studies the laws of nature, and yet he is not able to comprehend the mystery of creation and of the Creator and the meaning of life. He is not willing to study himself. He does not like to go deeper into the recesses of his heart and find out the Superman or the Indweller, who is behind his personality or false ego—the unseen Governor or the hidden sage, who sets the atoms in motion, who gives life to these atoms, who is the universal storehouse of energy. He will be groping in darkness unless and until he comes face to face with this hidden Light of lights, which sheds light to his intellect and senses and his atoms.

All the achievements of science and results of research are used for inhuman purposes. Science has not contributed anything to the real peace of man. It has rendered life more complex and luxurious. Many luxuries have become the very necessaries of life. Let us go back to nature and lead a peaceful and contented life with a few wants, with abundant devotion and meditation. Enough of science. Enough of research. O scientists turn mind inwards; do Atmic research and bring out the priceless treasures of the Soul.

What is that by knowing which everything else will be known, what is that by attaining which there will be no hankering for any other thing, what is that by realising which one becomes Immortal, fearless and desireless and rests in everlasting peace and happiness? It is Brahman or Atman or the ultimate Truth which is the *summum bonum* of life. It is Bhuma or the Highest or the Unconditioned. You can get real happiness only by attaining this Bhuma or the Highest Self.

3. THEORY OF REBIRTH

Man can be compared to a plant. He grows and flourishes like a plant and dies at the end but not completely. The plant also grows and flourishes and dies at the end. It leaves behind it the seed which produces a new plant. Man leaves when dying his Karma behind,—the good and bad actions of his life. The physical body may die and disintegrate, but the impressions of his actions do not die. He has to take birth again to enjoy the fruits of these actions. No life can be the first, for it is the fruit of previous actions, nor the last, for its actions must be expiated in the next life following. Therefore, Samsara or phenomenal existence is without beginning and end. But there is no Samsara for a Jivanmukta or liberated sage who is resting in his own Sat-chit-ananda Swaroop.

When a man dies, he carries with him the permanent Linga Sarira which is made up of 5 Jnana Indriyas, 5 Karma Indriyas, 5Pranas, mind, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankara and the changing Karmaasraya (receptacle of works, the actions of the Soul) which determines the formation of the next life.

Sri Jnana Dev, late reputed Yogi of Alandi, wrote his commentary on Gita Jnaneshwari when he was only sixteen years old. He was a born Siddha. You can also become a Siddha if you try in right earnest. What one has attained can be achieved by another also.

If a new-born child who has not done any wrong action in this birth undergoes great suffering—this is the fruit of some evil deed done in the previous birth. If you ask, how the person was induced to do a wrong action in his former birth, the answer is that, it was the result of some wrong action done in a birth still anterior and so on.

Many intelligent fathers have sons with dull intellect. If a shepherd boy gave you some food and water in your previous birth when you were dying of starvation, he will be born in this birth as your son, with a dull intellect to enjoy your property.

When creatures are born, they evince a desire to suck the breast and show an instinct of terror. Therefore it follows that they remember the sucking of the breast and the pains experienced in the previous birth. This shows that there is rebirth.

Even a child exhibits Harsha (exhilaration), Soka (grief), fear, anger, pleasure and pain. The Dharmaadharma Samskaras of this birth cannot be the cause of these. The Samskaras of the previous birth must have a support (Asraya). From this we can clearly infer the existence of Jiva in the previous birth and that the Jiva is Anadi or beginningless. If you do not accept that the Jiva is Anadi, the two Doshas viz., Kritanasa and Akritabhyagama will creep in. Pleasure and pain, which are the fruits of virtuous and vicious actions done previously will pass away without being enjoyed. This is the Dosha of Kritanasa. So also, one will have to enjoy pleasure and pain, the fruits of good and evil actions, which were done by him previously. This is the Dosha of Akritabhyagama. In order to get rid of these two Doshas, we will have to accept that the Jiva is Anadi or beginningless.

Some Yogic students ask me: "How long should one practise Sirshasan or Paschimottansan or Kumbhak or Mahamudra to awaken Kundalini? Nothing is mentioned on this point in any book on Yoga." A student starts his Sadhana from the point or stage he left in his previous birth. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: "Or he may be born in a family of wise Yogins. There he recovereth the characteristics belonging to his former body and with these he again laboureth for perfection, O joy of the Kurus!" Chap. VI—42, 43. It all depends upon the degree of purity, stage of evolution, the degree of purification of Nadis and the Pranamaya Kosha, degree of Vairag and yearning for liberation.

Some are born with purity and other requisites of realisation on account of their having undergone the necessary discipline in their past life. They are born Siddhas. Guru Nanak, Jnana Dev of Alandi, Vama Dev, Ashtavakra were all adepts from their very boyhood. Guru Nanak asked his teacher in the school when he was a boy, about the significance of OM. Vama Dev delivered lectures on Vedanta when he was dwelling in his mother's womb.

Man does actions with the expectation of getting fruits and so he takes a birth to enjoy the fruits of his actions. In the next birth, he does some more actions and he has to take another birth. In this manner the Samsaric wheel is revolving from eternity to eternity. When one gets knowledge of the Self, he is liberated from this round of births and deaths. Karma is beginningless and Samsara is also beginningless. When a man does actions without expectation of fruits in a selfless spirit, all the fetters of Karma get loosened gradually.

Die to live. Kill this little 'I' and attain immortality. Live in Brahman. You will live for ever. Possess Atma. You will have eternal life. Identify with your soul. You will cross the ocean of death or Samsara. Rest in your Sat-chit-ananda Swaroop. You will have ever-lasting life.

A leech moves on a blade of grass and reaches the end of the blade. It first catches hold of another blade with the fore-part of its body and then draws its hind part on to it. Even so, the Jivatman (individual soul) abandons the present body at the time of death, fashions the future body by his thought and then enters into that body.

A good or bad deed always brings its good or bad fruits. You will find in Maha Bharata: "Just as a calf finds out its mother among a thousand cows, so also an action that was performed in a previous birth follows after the doer."

Yadrisam kriyate karma tadrisam bhujyate phalam,
Yadrisamvapyate bijam tadrisam prapyate phalam.

Just as the fruit corresponds to the seed that has been sown, so also the fruit of the actions that are performed by us corresponds to the nature of the actions that we perform. This is an infallible law of nature. He who has sown the seed of a mango tree cannot expect a jack-fruit. He who has done evil actions throughout his life, cannot expect happiness, peace and prosperity in his next life.

"Many are the times we have all been together in the past, and also been separated and so again shall it be in the future. Even as a heap of grain removed from granary to granary ever assumes new order of arrangement and new combination, so is the case with Jivas (human beings) in the universe through this arrangement" (Yoga Vasishtha).

4. WHAT IS DEATH AND HOW TO CONQUER IT

Death is only a change of form. Death is only separation of the astral body from the physical body. Why are you so much afraid of death, my dear Vishwanathan?

Birth follows death just as waking follows sleep. You will again resume the work that was left off by you in your previous life. Therefore do not be afraid of death.

The idea of death has ever been the strongest motive-power of religion and religious life. Man is afraid of death. In old age he tries to think of God. If he remembers God even from his boyhood, he will reap a rich spiritual harvest in old age. Man does not want to die. He wants to live for ever. This is the starting point of philosophy. Philosophy enquires and investigates. It boldly proclaims: "O man, do not be afraid of death. There is an immortal abode. That is Brahman. That is your own Atma that dwells in the chambers of your heart. Purify your heart and meditate on this pure, immortal, changeless Self. You will attain immortality."

O Man, do not be afraid of death at all. Thou art immortal. Death is not the opposite of life. It is only a phase of life. Life follows on ceaselessly. The fruit perishes but the seed is full of life. The seed dies but a huge tree grows out of the seed. The tree perishes but it becomes coal which has a rich life. Water disappears but it becomes the invisible steam which contains the seed of a new life. The stone disappears but it becomes lime which is full of new life. The physical sheath only is thrown but life persists.

Can you tell me friend, "Is there any one on the surface of this earth who is not afraid of death? Is there any one who is not uttering the Name of the Lord when he is in serious difficulty, when his life is trembling in the balance, or when he is in acute agony?" Why then, O sceptics, do you deny the existence of God? You yourself admit His existence when you are in trouble. On account of perverted intellect and worldly intoxication you have turned out as an atheist. Is this not a great folly? Think seriously. Give up arguing. Remember Him and attain Immortality and eternal peace right now.

In Garuda Purana and Atma Purana it is described that the pangs of death tantamount to the pain caused by the stings of 72,000 scorpions. This is only mentioned to induce fear (Bhayanak Sabda) in the hearers and readers and force them to attempt for Moksha. In spiritualism there is the unanimous report from the enlightened spirits that there is not even a bit of pain during death. They clearly describe their experiences at death and state that they were relieved of a great burden of this physical body and that they enjoyed perfect composure at the time of separation from the physical body. Maya induces vain fear in the onlookers by inducing convulsive twitchings of the body. That is her nature and habit. Don't be afraid of death-pangs. You are immortal (Amara).

Strive ceaselessly to live in God through Japa, Kirtan, service of the poor and meditation. Then only you will be able to conquer Time or death.

When the God of Death comes to take your life, he will not accept your excuses: "I had no time to worship God in my life."

Knowledge of Brahman or Brahma Jnana alone can free us from the clutches of ignorance and death. This knowledge should come to us as a direct realisation through meditation.

Mere scholarship or intelligence or study of religious books cannot help us to attain the *summum bonum.* It is a matter of direct experience but not of argument or reasoning.

Habitual study of abstract problems will result in another earthly life, in a well-developed power for abstract thinking, while flippant hasty thinking, flying from one object to another, will bequeath a restless ill-regulated mind to the birth following in this world.

Self-realisation will remove Avidya or ignorance, the root-cause of human sufferings, and produce in you the knowledge of oneness of the Self, which is the means for eradicating grief, delusion, the dire malady of birth and death, the concomitants of Samsara or world's process.

The sun of pure consciouness is shining in the chambers of your heart. This spiritual Sun of suns is self-luminous. It is the Self of all beings, that transcends speech and mind. If you realise this Self, you will no more return to this Mrityuloka, the world of death.

Birth and death are two illusory scenes in the drama of this world, created by the jugglery of Maya. In truth nobody comes and nobody goes. Atma alone exists for ever. Destroy Moha and fear through enquiry and rest in peace.

"I know that mighty Purusha who resplendent like the Sun, transcends darkness (ignorance). By knowing Him alone, one conquers death. There is no other way to salvation." (Yajur Veda xxxi—181).

Every effort in the direction of Yoga never goes in vain. You will realise thereby the fruit of even a little Yogic practice. If you have succeeded in the practice of the three limbs of Yoga in this birth viz., Yama, Niyama and Asan, you will begin your practice in the next birth from fourth limb, viz., Pranayam. A Vedanti who has acquired two means viz., Viveka and Vairagya in this birth, will strart his practice in the next birth from the sixfold virtues, viz., Shama, Dama, etc. Therefore you should not be discouraged a bit even, if you fail to attain the Kaivalya or Independence or final Asamprajnata Samadhi in this birth. Even a little practice for a short period will give you more strength, more peace, more joy and more knowledge.

You cannot die, because you were never born. You are immortal Atma. Birth and death are two false scenes in the unreal Drama of Maya. They concern the physical sheath only,—a false product formed by the combination of the five elements. The ideas of birth and death are mere superstition.

This physical body which is made up of clay or earth is a toy for the Lord for His Leela or sporting. He is the wire-puller or Sutradhara. He keeps His toy running as long as He likes. Eventually He breaks the toy and throws the pieces away. The game of two ceases. There is only oneness. The individual soul merges in the supreme soul.

The knowledge of the Self destroys all fear of death. People are unnecessarily alarmed of death. Death is like sleep. Birth is like waking up from sleep in the morning. Just as you put on new clothes, so also you put on a new body after death. Death is a natural incident in its course. It is necessary for your evolution. When the physical body becomes unfit for further activities and use, Lord Rudra takes it away and supplies a new body. There is no pain at the time of death. Ignorant people have created much horror and terror regarding death.

There is only one Reality—Brahman. This world and body are superimposed on Brahman, just as snake is superimposed on the rope. As long as the rope is not known and the idea of snake persists, you are not free from fear. Similarly this world is a solid reality to you until Brahman is realised. When you see the rope with a light, the illusion of snake vanishes and the fear disappears. Even so when you realise Brahman, this world vanishes and you are freed from the fear of births and deaths.

You dream sometimes that you are dead and that your relatives are weeping. Even in that supposed death-state, you see and hear them weeping. This clearly indicates that even after apparent death, life really persists. You exist even after the physical sheath is thrown out. That existence is Atma or the big 'I'.

If you realise this immortal soul which is hidden in your heart all these forms of the three knots viz., Avidya (ignorance), Kama (desire) and Karma (action) are rent asunder, if the chain of ignorance viz., ignorance, non-discrimination, egoism, likes and dislikes, Karma, body is broken, you will be freed from the round of births and deaths, you will enter the city of deathlessness.

5. MOKSHA

Moksha is the *summum bonum* of life. Moksha is the fulfilment of life's purpose. Life ends on this earth plane when you attain Moksha or liberation from birth and death. The realisation of your real object in life is freedom or Moksha. Moksha bestows on you eternal life of undecaying bliss and perennial joy. Moksha is not annihilation. Moksha is the annihilation of this little self-arrogating ego only. Moksha is realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the supreme Soul. By annihilating this little self you possess the whole of true universality, you attain an eternal life.

Mukti is obtained through the knowledge of the Self. To attain Jnana, you must have one-pointedness of mind (Ekagrata). Ekagrata comes through Upasana. Upasana comes through purity of heart (Chitta Suddhi). Chitta Suddhi comes through Nishkamya Karma Yoga. To do Nishkamya Karma, you must have controlled the Indriyas. The Indriyas can be controlled through Viveka and Vairagya.

Moksha is not to be regarded as a becoming into something which previously had no existence. Moksha is not something to be achieved. It is already achieved. Everything is one with Absolute or Para Brahman. What is to be achieved is annihilation of the sense of separateness. Moksha is the direct perception of that which has existed from eternity, but has hitherto been concealed from us on account of the veil of ignorance. Moksha is attainment of the Supreme Bliss or Immortality and removal of all kinds of pain. Moksha is freedom from birth and death.

Freedom or Mukti is your real nature. You will have to know this truth only through direct intuitive experience.

You will have to cut asunder the veil of ignorance by meditation on the Self. Then you will shine in your original pristine purity and divine glory.

Brahman, Self, Purusha, Chaitanya, Consciousness, God, Atma, Immortality, Freedom, Perfection, Peace, Bliss, Bhuma or the unconditioned are synonymous terms. If you attain Self-realisation alone, will you be freed from the round of births and deaths and its concomitant evils. The goal of life is the attainment of the final beatitude or Moksha. Moksha can be attained by constant meditation with a heart that is rendered pure and steady by selfless service and Japa.

Moksha is the highest benefit, Parama Prayojana. Jnana is the benefit which one gets in the internal (Avantara Prayojana). Just as plantain fruit is the highest benefit which one gets, and the leaves, etc., are the Avantara Prayojana in the interval before one gets the fruit, so also Moksha is the highest benefit and Jnana is Avantara Prayojana. Jnana is only the means to attain the highest bliss.

The Jiva falsely superimposes the body and others which are not Self upon himself and identifies himself with them. This identification constitutes bondage. The freedom from this identification is Moksha. That which causes this identification is Avidya or nescience. That which removes the identification is Vidya. Attainment of knowledge of the Self eradicates this Avidya and its effects. The Swaroopa of Moksha is the attainment of Supreme Bliss and removal of all kinds of sufferings.

The right knowledge of Brahman consists in knowing that He is one with one's own self. The difference between the Jiva and the Brahman lies only in the Upadhi or limiting adjunct. The Jiva, though he is Brahman in reality or essence is subject to the miseries of worldly existence as caused by his connection with the Upadhi of Antahkarana or the fourfold mind (the inner instrument). As there is no real distinction between them, it should be known that Brahman is identical with the Self. Hence it is said that those who know the real truth understand Brahman to be identical with the Self as declared in the great sentences of the Upanishads or Mahavakyas: "I am Brahman"—"This Self is Brahman". They even teach the same thing to their disciples in the words: "Tat Twam Asi—Thou art That." Therefore it should be known that Brahman is identical with the Self.

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself. Having become Brahman while yet alive, he is freed from the round of birth and death. Knowledge of Brahman alone is the means of emancipation or Moksha.

Chapter Two

HINDUISM

1. HINDUISM

A Hindu is one who lives in Hindustan. This is one kind of definition. A Hindu is one who believes in Sanatana Dharma, who believes in the theory of transmigration, immortality of soul, the teachings of Vedas and the Varnashrama Dharma. The common religious book for the Hindus is Gita and the common Mantra is Gayatri. The common name of God is Brahman, Paramatman, Bhagawan or Ishwara.

Strictly speaking Hinduism is Arya Dharma or Manava Dharma. Hinduism is the source for all religions. Lord Buddha who was born and bred up in Hindu religion made some changes here and there and brought forth a new religion 'Buddhism' to suit the temperament and stage of evolution of the people who lived in his time. Buddhism is only an off-shoot of Hinduism. Lord Jesus who made Tapas in Cashmere and Benares imbibed the teachings and principles of Hinduism and brought forth a religion to suit the fishermen of Palestine. Mahavira made some changes here and there and brought forth a religion 'Jainism' which is only an off-shoot of Buddhism. Zoroastrianism and Christianity and all 'isms' are all really off-shoots of Hinduism only.

Hinduism is more a philosophy than a religion. It is like an ocean. Just as all rivers join the ocean, so also all religions join Hinduism. All religions have come out of Hinduism. Any kind of man with any kind of temperament, with any kind of capacity, can find out his easy path for salvation in Hinduism. There are so many roads in Hinduism to take any kind of man to the goal. That is the beauty of Hinduism. The teachings of Rishis of yore do not pertain to Hindus alone. They are of an all-embracing, universal nature. They are meant for the people of the whole world. Gita and Upanishads are books for the people of the whole world.

Hindu religious books contain philosophy, rituals and myths. These three things are necessary. The object of myth and legend in the Vedas is merely to lure the mind to the truths of religion. The ancient Indian sages introduced the myth and legend in order to inculcate the principles of ethics or the tenets of religion in the people. You will have to dive deep and separate the pearls of truth and wisdom from the shells in which they are imbedded. It is the superficial observer only who makes thoughtless remarks and unwise and unjust criticism when he comes across myths and legends.

If you change your angle of vision, every worldly work will become a Yogic activity. A poor man also can reach the goal through service and devotion. Money is not necessary for him. Hindu philosophy is all-embracing. Even a scavenger can attain Moksha while doing his usual work with Nishkamya Bhav. The wise Rishis of yore have chalked out different paths for different types of persons,, according to taste, temperament and capacity.

Proper understanding of Vedanta and its principles and practice of Vedanta in daily life, is sure to bring peace, solace and happiness to a world distracted to-day by war, communal strifes, petty quarrels and religious fights.

2. TRUE RELIGION

Religion is real spiritual life in the soul. Religion and life are not two but one. The word "religion" comes from Latin roots 're'—back, 'ligare'—to bind. The mind which is wandering in the sensual objects of this world is fixed to the soul, the original source or abode. Without religion there cannot be any real life. Let us talk of religion less, practise more.

Religion is eternal life in the immortal Soul. Religion is perfection or harmony. Religion is oneness or unity. Religion is above mind and senses. Religion is above ceremonials and ritualism. Religion is union with God. Religion is the attainment of divine consciousness or divine wisdom. Religion is freedom from ignorance, illusion, doubt, fear, grief and delusion. Religion is a call to action in the Adhyatmic field for fighting the battle of righteousness and establishing the ancient Dharmas which elevate the soul and confer Sreyas or Moksha or eternal bliss.

Religion is a faith for knowing God and worshipping Him. It is not a matter for discussion at a club-table. It is the Realisation of the true Self. It is the fulfilment of the deepest craving in man.

Therefore hold religion as the highest prize of your life. Live every moment of your life for its realisation. Life without practical religion is real death.

Religion is one. Real religion is practical. Real religion is the spiritual life beyond senses. Real religion is realisation of Atma. Real religion is feeling God, seeing God and talking to God.

Friends, why do you try to convert a man? There is only one religion on the surface of this earth. That one religion is the religion of love. Conversion is a great social evil. This is the chief and potent cause for communal troubles and disturbances. He who attempts to convert another is unwise. He sows the seed for riots and disturbs the peace of the land.

Why do you fight about petty dogmas of different cults? The essentials of all religions are the same. Why do you fight about non-essentials? Do not lose sight of the core or essence of religion. Take the juice and throw off the rind and the skin of the fruit. Take the kernel and throw away the shell. Develop absolute tolerance. You cannot grow if you are not tolerant. Embrace all cults, all religionists, all sects in your fold. You will have unbounded joy, peace and power.

Annihilation of egoism and likes and dislikes, realisation of the Self, love for all beings, selfless service of humanity with Atma Bhav—this is the essence of true religion.

Religion is practical. Religion must become part and parcel of your daily life. Mere curiosity and a little bubbling juvenile enthusiasm and emotion cannot help you much in your spiritual growth and evolution. Struggle and sustained efforts are needed.

Religion is the science of life. It teaches us to live in God and attain immortality. It helps us to enter the realms of eternal bliss and unceasing peace. It removes the veil of ignorance and enables us to realise the sublime vision of unity of Self.

Some say that religion is a luxury. Those who say that religion is a luxury are sunk in ignorance and worldliness. How can a man live without religion. Religion only enables him to get rid of delusion, sorrow, pain and death and Shows him the way to attain the summum bonum or the abode of immortality. Through religion alone he can become perfect and faultless.

3. GLORY OF MOTHER INDIA

India is a spiritual country. India never conquered territories or annexed dominions. Military conquest was not her ambition. She wanted her children to have Atma Swarajya or Absolute Independence. She does not call upon them to rule over others. She wants them to have conquest over internal and external nature. She wants them to possess brilliant divine virtues, moral stamina and inner spiritual strength born of wisdom of the soul. Ahimsa is her weapon to have spiritual conquest and the conquest of the minds of others.

People of India have Self-realisation as their goal. They do not care for material prosperity and advancement. They want Yoga or communion with the Lord. They practise Ahimsa, Satya, Brahmacharya. They wish to enjoy the eternal bliss of the Absolute. They are always ready to renounce worldly possessions in order to possess or realise the inner Atman or Brahman. They will sacrifice anything and everything in order to attain the Immortal Atman. They are always spiritually-minded.

India is the land of Yogins, Rishis and sages. How charming is the Himalayan scenery ! How sweet is Mother Ganges ! How soothing and elevating are their vibrations ! How soul-stirring is the company of the Yogins! How beautiful and lovely is Rishikesh, with Yogins, Ganges and Himalayas ! If you want to practise Yoga, come to India and stay in Rishikesh. Enjoy the peace of solitude. Realise the bliss of the soul. Meditate in silence. Enter the stupendous silence. May you become a Yogi !

Great souls are born in all parts of the world, but the number of great souls is greater in India than in any part of the world. This is the characteristic feature of India. Hence India is called the land of Rishis and Sages.

India is a land of Yogins, Rishis, sages and seers. India is the land that has produced many Acharyas or spiritual preceptors like Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, many saints like Kabir, Ramdas, Tukaram, Gauranga Maha Prabhu, many Yogins like Jnana Dev, Gorakhnath, many sages like Dattatreya, Sadasiva Brahman. Even now she abounds with sages and great souls.

You cannot find sandal trees in all forests. You cannot find pearls in all seas. You cannot find gold in all parts of the earth. You cannot find sages in all parts of the world.

Hail India, the beautiful land of saints, Yogins and Rishis, which contains sacred rivers,—Ganges, the Jamuna, the Narbada, the Godavari, the Indus and the Kaveri, and the magnanimous Himalayas! Hail Bharatavarsha, the land of ancient glory, the sacred land trodden by the holy feet of Sri Rama, Krishna, Vyasa, Sankara, Dattatreya, Patanjali Maharshi, and others! Hail, Hail, Aryavartha, the sweet home for practising Tapas and Yoga which still abounds with Rishis, Yogins and sages! Hail Mother-land, the land of Gods and Jivanmuktas which contains beautiful forests and solitary retreats like Nimsar, Jhusi, Uttarkasi, Rishikesh, etc., and sacred places like Kurukshetra wherein Lord Krishna gave once His dynamic message to his beloved disciple Arjuna through the immortal song of Gita! May God bless thy children and give them right understanding, knowledge of the Self and spiritual strength to serve Thee and raise thy banner high!

Nazism, Fascism, Bolshevism and all 'isms' will fail to bring peace to man. It is only the Sadhuism or Rishism or Upanishadism of sacred India that can give everlasting peace to man.

What is Sadhuism? Sadhuism is to practise self-restraint and to live in God. What is Rishism? Rishism is to attain immortality through purity, selfless service, cosmic love, devotion and meditation. What is Upanishadism? Upanishadism is to have the knowledge of the Self or the Brahman of the Upanishads through self-analysis, enquiry, hearing of the Srutis, reflection and meditation on the Self, which is self-luminous, all-pervading, indivisible, timeless, spaceless and deathless.

Swaraj for India or any other nation can only be achieved if political activities go hand in hand with spiritual practice. The workers should regard that every action is Yoga and an offering unto the Lord. They should be free from selfishness, greed, lust and hatred and possess truthfulness, forbearance, self-restraint, cosmic live, large-heartedness coupled with broad tolerance and a strong conviction in the existence of God.

India is a sacred land with several holy rivers and powerful spiritual vibrations. The hoary Himalayas attract the people of the whole world. It is a land peculiarly suitable for divine contemplation and Yogic practices. Every country has its own special attractive features. India is a land of Yogins and sages. This is the special attractive feature of India. This is the reason why people from America, England and all parts of the world come to India for the practice of Yoga. Glory to India. Glory to the Rishis and sages!

India is the best of all lands. Ganges is the best of all rivers. Himalayas are the best of all mountains. Truthfulness is the best of all virtues. A realised Guru is the best of all men. Atma is the best of all beloved things. Therefore live in India on the banks of the Ganges. Speak the truth. Seek refuge under a realised Guru and realise the Atma and be free.

Chapter Three

GURU AND DISCIPLE

1. NECESSITY FOR A GURU

Knowledge of the Self can be attained only by the Grace of the Guru or the spiritual preceptor. The knowledge is transmitted from the preceptor to disciple.

You can know the unknowable (Brahman) by purifying your mind, by serving a Guru who is a Brahmanishtha (established in truth), by getting lessons from him and by meditation.

A medical student is in urgent need of a Professor of medicine. A Junior Vakil needs the help of a senior advocate for his guidance. A junior cook needs the help of a senior cook. When such is the case with worldly matters, what to speak of Adhyatmic spiritual subjects which deal with hidden, subtle Atma ! The help of a Guru who has realised the Self is imperatively necessary for the aspirant for his guidance. Otherwise he will be groping in the thick forest of darkness, of ignorance.

The aspirant gets obstacles or impediments, dangers, snares, pitfalls on the spiritual path. He will have to be very careful in Sadhan also. A Guru who has already trodden the path and reached the goal is very necessary to guide him.

Young aspirants should always live under the guidance of a perfect Guru for some years. They should be under subjection. They should learn perfect obedience and humility. If they have their own ways, they become arrogant and conceited. They do not make even an iota of progress in spirituality.

In nature no two trees are alike; no two leaves are alike; no two persons are alike; no two vibrations are alike;

no two temperaments are alike; no two minds are alike. Therefore there are various ways for controlling the mind to suit people of different temperaments. Each can have his own way of Sadhana. For yourself if you are not able to chalk out the path, get it from a Guru or preceptor. Learn Yoga under a Guru. Then only you will be able to understand the subtle points of Yoga. He will inspire you when you are depressed, will remove your doubts when you come across stumbling blocks on the path, and show you the right path because he has already trodden the path himself. If you are sincere and earnest, the Guru's grace will flow to you like Tailadhara—a continuous flow of oil. He will infuse energy, love, wisdom and spiritual current if you have true receptive attitude, sincere faith and devotion to him. Now stick to one path and one Guru. Do not waver. Be patient. Be sincere.

Aspirants do not possess unshakable faith in the Guru or Srutis. They have half or wavering faith. That is the reason why they fail in attaining success in Yoga or Jnana.

The Lord and the Guru are both one. Try to see the Lord in your Guru. Then only you will have progress in the spiritual path. Then only you will attain Self-realisation. If you try to see defects in your Guru, you will not be benefited in the least. Guru is your father. Guru is your mother. Guru is your saviour. Guru is your sole refuge and support. Therefore revere your Guru as the Lord Himself.

The real aspirant should drink the Charanamrita of his Guru, should take the Guru's Ucchishta, should meditate on the form of his Guru as Brahman Himself and should do Japa of his Guru Mantra constantly. Then he will have Self-realisation easily.

The duty of a soldier is to obey implicitly the commands of the commander. He must not question anything. Even so the duty of an aspirant is to obey implicitly the orders of his Guru. Then only he can grow quickly in the spiritual path.

He who is devoted to his Guru and has done Upasana can only comprehend the depths of the teachings of the Vedant. You will find also in Sweta-svatara Upanishad! "Whoso hath highest love for God and for the Guru as for God, to that Mahatman, the truths here taught shine in full." Section VI-23.

The teacher in this world is said to be of three kinds, viz., the one who commands, the one who imparts knowledge, and the supreme one who gives release. The one who commands shows the way; the one who imparts knowledge teaches the supreme place; and the one who gives release reveals the supreme truth, knowing which you will attain immortality.

The people after crossing a river, wanted to see whether all the passengers were alive. But each of them counted all the nine others except himself, and found that one was missing and all began to weep bitterly for the loss of one of them. At last they were disillusioned by some one telling each of them that the reckoner himself was the tenth.

Just as the iron filings are magnetised in the presence of a magnet, so also aspirants are magnetised when they are in close contact with their masters or Gurus. Just as iron is transmuted into gold by the touch of philosopher's stone, so also persons with evil tendencies are transmuted into veritable saints when they come in close contact with sages and Yogins.

When a Guru is in the physical body, he can help the aspirants and disciples more. If the disciple has faith in his Guru, he will help him even after he has abandoned his physical body. Sri Sankara, the propounder of the Advaita philosophy, Sri Dattatreya, Sri Jnana Dev of Alandi even now bless the aspirants who have devotion unto them. They have no body on earth but yours, no hands and feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which they behold this universe. They move about through your feet and do good to the world.

2. GURU AND DISCIPLE

One who is versed in Vedas, who has knowledge of Brahman, who has a balanced mind, who is an ocean of mercy and who is able to remove the doubts and obstacles and Avaran of the aspirants is a real Guru.

A true Sat Guru is absolutely free from passion, anger, selfishness, greed, hatred and egoism. He is beyond worldly temptations. He is able to remove the ignorance of people. He can clear any kind of doubt. He can give practical, easy lessons to control the mind and the senses. His instructions are very impressive. Even an arrogant proud man bends his head before him. He is able to take the students to the door of Moksha. He can remove the obstacles, pitfalls and snares on the path. He is versed in the Vedas. He is sinless. He is an ocean of mercy. He is a friend to all.

There are some Sattwic souls in these days but sages who have Brahmic experience are very rare. These Sattwic souls have no direct experience and they are mistaken for liberated sages. Even Sattwic aspirants who are treading the path of Truth, who possess virtuous qualities must be adored. Such aspirants also are very rare. Some Sattwic souls pose for Jivanmuktas. This is deplorable. Their disciples begin to worship them, gradually they get a downfall by becoming a slave to respect, honour and worship. Maya havocs in a variety of ways. It is very difficult to understand her ways and operations.

Doubtless there is dearth of genuine Gurus. But there is still more dearth of genuine disciples also.

Aspirants complain: "We cannot get good Gurus in these days." Gurus also complain: "We do not get good disciples these days." Who is right? Who is wrong? The lower court cannot decide this point. The matter will have to be assuredly placed before the Privy Council of Jnanins. Can a patient gauge the merits of a doctor as soon as he enters the consultation room? Ignorant disciples who have not even an iota of experience in the spiritual path at once begin to test and examine the Gurus. They make serious remarks, some hasty, wrong conclusions and inferences from external appearances and ways of living. Paramahamsas have different mysterious ways of living. Even though you live with them shoulder to shoulder for twelve years, you can hardly understand their hearts and depth of knowledge. Jnana and spiritual experiences are quite internal states. Foolish Chelas run from one Guru to another Guru. Pitiable indeed is their lot!

Don't dig here and there shallow pits for getting water. The pits will dry soon. Make a very deep pit in one place. Centralise all your efforts here. You will get good water throughout the year. Even so, try to imbibe thoroughly the spiritual teachings from one preceptor alone. Drink deep from one man. Sit at his feet for some years. There is no use of wandering from one man to another man out of curiosity, losing faith in a short time. Don't have the ever-changing mind of a prostitute.

With the help of one light you can light up several other lights. Even so, a realised soul can make several others realise God, provided they are in a fit condition to receive the light imparted by him. Therefore serve your preceptor with great devotion. Out of compassion on you one day or other he will enlighten you. He will lift you up. Wait patiently. Surrender yourself unto him completely.

He alone who sits at the lotus feet of a preceptor, who has knowledge of the Self and who is also well-versed in scriptural knowledge is able to grasp the Truth. In Gita also, Chap. IV-34, Lord Krishna says: "Know it by means of prostration to the Guru, interrogation and service. The wise who have cognised the Truth will instruct thee in that knowledge of the Self."

Initiation into the mysteries of Brahman will fructify only in that disciple's mind who is desireless and will produce Jnana in him.

It takes a long time for the charcoal to catch fire but gun powder can be ignited within the twinkling of an eye. Even so, it takes a long time for igniting the fire of knowledge for a man whose heart is impure. But an aspirant with great purity of heart gets knowledge of the Self within the twinkling of an eye, within the time taken to squeeze a flower by the fingers.

Unless you are pure, you will not be able to realise the true greatness of a liberated sage. When he appears before you, you will take him for an ordinary man only, and you will not be benefited. You will try to find out defects in him on account of your fault-finding nature (Dosha Drishti). Even if Lord Krishna or Sri Sankara remains with you, He will not do anything for you, unless you are fit to receive Him, unless you are ready to receive the spiritual instructions.

It is quite true that mere Grace of a Guru, his touch, sight or Sankalpa can work wonders, but that does not mean that the disciple should sit idle. Guru will show the path and remove obstacles, snares and pitfalls. The student will have to place his feet on the rungs of the ladder of Yoga. Gita says: "Uddharet atmana atmanam na atmanam avasadayet—Let him raise the Self by the Self, let him not lower himself." Chap. VI. 5.

Guru's Grace is needed by the disciple. This does not mean that the disciple should sit idle and expect a miracle from the Guru to push him directly into Samadhi. The Guru cannot do Sadhan for the student. He can guide the student, clear his doubts, pave the way, remove snares, pitfalls and obstacles and throw light on the path. The disciple himself will have to place each foot step in the spiritual path. He himself will have to place his step on each rung of the ladder of Yoga.

You will have to place each step yourself in the spiritual path or rung of the ladder of Yoga. No miracle will happen to push you into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Teachers can inspire you and remove your doubts and pitfalls. Introspect, find out weaknesses and remove them. Be regular in your meditation. You will reach the goal quickly.

Realisation cannot come to the student as a miracle done by the Guru. Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Ram Tirth have all done spiritual Sadhana. Lord Krishna prescribes: "Vairagya, Abhyasa—dispassion and practice." He did not say to Arjuna: "I will give you Mukti directly."

When there is intense urge from within to take the definite steps in the spiritual path, you will have to take recourse to rigorous Sadhana. But the Sadhan must be well-regulated and gradual. There must be ladder-like ascent like the rise of temperature in Typhoid fever. You must place your footstep in the Yoga ladder just as you place your footstep in the stair-case.

Distance has nothing to do between a Master and a disciple. It is the nearness of the heart that counts. There must be perfect unity between the Guru and the Chela. Then only the disciple will be immensely benefited.

The sun is at a very long distance and yet the lotus rejoices in the morning as soon as it beholds the sun. The moon is at a very long distance and yet the lady-of-the-lake bursts into joy when it sees the moon. The clouds are at a long distance and yet the peacock dances in joy when it sees the clouds. Even so, friends may be separated by a long distance and yet they can be well-united in bonds of friendship and love. Distance is no bar. Gurus and disciples may live in distant places and yet the Gurus may help their disciples by their strong spiritual thought-currents.

This is a strange world. We have to learn many lessons. Even the disciple who was devoted once to his Guru tries to destroy his own beloved Master at a later time. Many obstacles will come for the growing aspirant only at every step. These will develop his soul-force, inner strength and power of endurance. The aspirant will have to show his strength when he is placed in adverse condition. He should think and feel that nothing has happened.

If you have no Guru, take God, Lord Krishna, Lord Siva or Rama as your Guru. Pray to Him. Meditate on Him. Sing His Name. Remember Him. He will send you a suitable Guru. A personal Guru is necessary in the beginning. He the Guru of Gurus alone can show you the path to attain God, and obviate the snares and pitfalls on the path.

3. QUALIFICATIONS OF ASPIRANTS

Who is a qualified person for attaining immortality?

That man who has shaken off earthly impurities, who has removed worldliness and all sorts of worldly attachments is fit to tread the path of Yoga. He must have purity of nature and cleanliness of life also.

A man who has removed his sins by lot of Tapascharya, who is calm (Santa) and free from attachment (Veeta Raga Purusha) and who longs for liberation from Samsara (wheel of birth and death) is only entitled to read books on Vedanta and other Atma Jnana books.

Those spiritual aspirants, who have destroyed their sins by several Tapas (austerities), who possess a tranquil mind, who are free from attachment of all sorts, who have controlled the Indriyas, who have intense faith in Guru and Srutis, and who long for liberation are fit for the attainment of Jnana (Knowledge of the Self). They are Adhikarins to approach Brahmanishtha Guru for getting instructions.

Have Vairagya with the world and its objects and Prem (love) with God and spiritual Sadhana.

The way of the enlightened sage is sinless. The way to liberation or freedom of perfect happiness and peace is through perfect purity of mind and heart, of every act, of character and life, through self-restraint and control of mind, and through regular meditation on the pure, self-luminous, indivisible, all-pervading Atman.

Even if there is a small white patch (leucoderma) on the face of a young damsel, it certainly mars her beauty. Even so, even if there is a small defect in an aspirant, it undoubtedly spoils his character and life. An aspirant should be absolutely free from all kinds of weaknesses and faults. He should be an ideal person endowed with all virtues.

Direct realisation of the Self is a means to liberation. He who is endowed with the four means of salvation will be able to realise the Self. One can acquire these four qualifications —Viveka, Vairagya, Shad-Sampat and Mumukshutwa by following strictly the duties of his own caste and order, by Tapas and selfless service, by propitiating his own Ishta Devata or tutelary deity and serving his Guru.

You cannot do tailoring without scissors, needle and thread. You cannot dig the earth without a spade. Even so, you cannot attain Brahma Jnana without possessing the four means—Discrimination, dispassion, six-fold virtues and yearning for liberation. The teachings of Vedanta can enter the mind of that person who has attained purity of heart by performing selfless service or Nishkamya Karma Yoga.

Even an Avatar will not help you unless you possess these qualifications of an asppirant: "Santo, Veeta-Raga, Nispriha, Sarvasanga Parityaga, Astika, Sadachara, Jitendriya, real sustained Vairagya strong determination, patience, perseverance, obedience, humility, etc."

The preliminary qualification for a student of Vedanta is an earnest desire to search for the truth. He must always keep alive this desire for truth. It is the fundamental prerequisite for an aspirant. If one has this qualification or merit, all merits will cling to him. All good qualities will come by themselves. Then alone he will be able to tread the path of truth easily.

Manushyatwa (human birth), Mumukshutwa (keen yearning for liberation). Sat-sang (company of sages), service of

Guru, hearing of Srutis, reflection and constant, protracted and profound meditation are necessary for the attainment of salvation.

Faith, dispassion, self-restraint, one-pointedness of mind, purity of heart, devotion, desire for liberation and meditation are the immediate factors of liberation for the aspirant. He who is endowed with these qualities attains immortality and knowledge.

Absence of egoism, development of good qualities, cheerfulness, self-surrender, absence of passion and anger, keeping up a balanced mind at all times, facing honour and dishonour with same feeling, aversion to sensual objects, heat and cold are some of the signs of the person who is on the path of Realisation. These are not to be achieved in a day or two. It is the work of years of ceaseless and protracted Sadhan.

In the spiritual path, there is no preference for graduates, Masters of Arts or Doctors of Philosophy. University qualifications can hardly benefit a man in the rigorous path of truth. He who is endowed with dispassion, discrimination, humility, devotion and power of endurance, who has subdued his mind and senses is a qualified person for this path. You are nowhere if you argue too much. The education of the present day induces a man to enter always into unnecessary discussions and controversies. He misses the goal. He only becomes a dry, talkative Pundit.

The Guru will only impart spiritual instructions to that aspirant who thirsts for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the Shastras, who has subdued his passions and senses, who has a calm mind, and who possesses virtues like mercy, cosmic love, patience, humility, endurance, forbearance, etc.

Uttama Adhikarins (first class aspirants) only can have Self-realisation within 3 days. Madhyama Adhikarins (middle class) should do rigorous Sadhana for a long time.

An aspirant should be firm as the Meru, free as the ether, fragrant as the jasmine, broad as the sky, forbearing as the earth, forgiving as the parents, radiant as the sun, fearless as the lion, generous as Ranti Deva.

Live without the feeling of 'I'ness, and attachment. Restrain the senses. Observe the rules of right conduct. Get purity of the heart. Hear the Truth. Abide in the Self. Be happy.

A selfish man is unrighteous. Attachment and sense of separateness are present in him to a remarkable degree. He cannot develop those qualities which Yoga needs. A desire to become a Yogi and to learn Yoga can only arise in a man who is free from selfishness, who is righteous, and who has religious disposition. Selfishness constricts the heart and forces a man to do injury to others and to get hold of the property of others by foul means. It is selfishness that prompts a man to do sinful acts.

Austerity, study of religious books and Japa of Mantra, devotion to the Lord and surrender to God constitute Kriya Yoga or action according to Patanjali Maharshi. This is the first Sutra in Second Chapter, Sadhanapada. This is a Yoga of discipline. The practice of Kriya Yoga prepares the Yogic student for entering into Samadhi or super-conscious state. It purifies the heart and thins out the five afflictions viz., Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesha and Abhinivesa (ignorance, egoism, love, hatred and clinging to earthly life). The pure and the unselfish alone will be quite fit to receive the divine light and drink the nectar of immortality.

If you fail to ask the wise what you know not, you will remain a dunce throughout your life.

Sit at the lotus-feet of your Guru with Bhav and faith. Serve him with sincerity, humility and love. Prostrate before him—morning and evening. Clear your doubts. Hear the Srutis from him. Reflect. Meditate. Behold the Supreme, transcendental light of lights. Drink deep the wisdom-nectar and attain Immortality.

You will have to do minor Sadhanas in purifying yourself before you are fit to approach any preceptor or Guru. You must be in possession of the preliminary qualifications of an aspirant.

The student of Yoga should be abstemious in his diet. He should avoid laziness, ease, habitual langour and excess of sleep. He should observe silence and occasional mild fasts to ensure a good tone to his constitution. He should develop correct habits. He should check all sorts of ambitions and the counter currents of the worldly desires by enquiry, thinking and discrimination. He should say unto the deceiving mind: "O Mind. I know your tricks. I have got dispassion and discrimination now. Do not wag your tail now. I will clip it off mercilessly. I have learnt many lessons. It is only ignorance that makes a man to prefer a transient gain to permanent benefits. I do not want again these sensual enjoyment. They are like vomited matter for me. I have resolved to attain the free, everlasting fruits of Yoga viz., eternal peace, infinite bliss and supreme joy."

If you remove a fish out of water and place it on the shore, it will flutter about in intense agony. It will be thirsting for re-entry into the water. If you keep a boy in the cold water of the Ganges for a short time, he will be in a greatly agitated condition. He will shriek and yell out. He will be eager to come out of water. When the house of a man has caught fire, the owner of the house runs immediately to the municipal office to get the fire-brigade for extinguishing the fire. He takes immediate steps. Similarly you should have earnestness and desire for liberation.

Abandon the idea of becoming a Yogi with in a few months' practice. It takes years and years of sincere Sadhana, practice of Brahmacharya and Ahimsa. You have to labour hard for many years to become a graduate and to earn even a small salary. How much more difficult it will be to become a Yogi and to attain immortality.

O aspirants, have the strong determination: "I will realise God now or I will die."

Do not say: "I will realise in my next birth." I will take a cudgel to beat you. I will become very angry. You can realise in this very second if you thirst for God ond God alone and do sincere, intense Sadhana.

4. SANCHITA, PURUSHARTHA AND PRARABDHA KARMAS

Tarkash (quiver), the case in which arrows are accumulated represents our Sanchita Karmas; the arrow that is ready for shooting represents our Agami Karma; and the arrow which has left the bow, which cannot return and which must hit the traget represents Prarabdha Karma.

The store-room is the Sanchita. The articles that are put in the shop for sale are Prarabdha. The daily sale proceeds are the Agami.

Sanchita Karmas are the accumulated works; Prarabdha Karmas are ripe or fructiferous actions: Kriyamana Aagami Karmas are current works.

The big storehouse for paddy represents Sanchita Karma. The paddy that has been taken out separately for the use of the current year corresponds to the Prarabdha; and the paddy that is growing in the fields in the current year represents Agami Karma or Kriyamana.

Sanchita Karmas are destroyed by Brahma Jnana. One should enjoy the Prarabdha anyhow. (Vyavaharic Drishti only) Kriyamana Karmas are no actions as the Jnani has Akarta and Sakshi Bhav.

God and Purushartha are synonymous terms. They are two names for one thing.

In Mahabharata you will find that exertion (Purushartha) and Prarabdha combined bring about fruits.

If you are ailing, you must do Purushartha. You must take medicine. You leave the results to Prarabdha.

Throughout Yoga Vasishtha, Vasishthaji recommends Purushartha only to Sri Rama. Markandeya through Purushartha alone conquered death. Man is, doubtless, the master of his own destiny.

Purushartha can do and undo things. Markandeya changed his destiny through his Tapas. Fatalism will produce abnormal inertia. God helps those who help themselves. Be up and doing. Man is the master of his destiny. Prarabdha is the result of your own thoughts and actions. Change your mode of thinking. Think: "I am the Immortal Self." The immortal Self you will become. As you think, you so become. This is the immutable law.

You have now the habit of thinking "I am body. I am mind. I am Prana. I am Indriya or sense." Change your present habit of thinking and think "I am Brahman. I am the all-pervading intelligence." You will conquer your destiny. If you are in the habit of writing in a slanting manner, you can change your habit and can write in a vertical manner. Even so you can change your habit of thinking. Conquest of habit is conquest of destiny.

Fate or destiny is your own creation through your own Karmas. You are the master of your own destiny. Change your mode of thinking. Instead of foolishly thinking "I am body," think "I am Atma, all-pervading."

Prarabdha can elevate anybody to any high level, even to god-head. The life of James Ramsay MacDonald is worth mentioning. He was a man of great Purushartha. He rose from poverty to power, from a field labourer to the Prime Minister of Britain. His first job was addressing envelopes for 10 Sh. a week. He was too poor to buy tea; so he drank water instead. His main meal every day for months was a three-penny beef-steak-pudding. He was a pupil teacher. He took great interest in Politics and Science. He was a journalist. He gradually, through right exertion (Purushartha) rose to the present position in life.

Take care of your thoughts. Then the actions will take care of themselves. Action follows thoughts. Acts create habits. Habit creates character. Character creates destiny. So your destiny is in your hands. Shut out all evil thoughts. Allow good thoughts. We are what our thoughts have made us and will be what they make us.

You are not bound. You have got free will. You cannot change the experiences, the results of Prarabdha but you can change your future by right thinking and right action and thus make your will pure and irresistible. You can attain Self-realisation with the help of a dynamic will.

The husk is natural to rice and the rust to the copper, yet they disappear through efforts made. Even so Ajnana which clings to the Jiva or individual soul can be made to disappear through the ceaseless Atmic enquiry. Destroy the Avidya. May you rest incomparably firm in your own Self.

The man who advocates the theory of Purushartha says: "Am I a straw to be tossed about hither and thither? I can change my Prarabdha. I will undo it by Vedantic practice. I have got a Free Will of my own. I will make it pure strong and irresistible. I will work out my salvation. I will become free myself."

Another philosopher says: "Everything is pre-arranged in the Grand Plan or Grand Scheme. God knows the whole details of evolution of a man from mineral life till he becomes a Jivanmukta or a liberated soul. In reality all is Prarabdha only. We will have to preach Purushartha just to give an impetus for the man to work in right earnest. Otherwise he will become slothful and dull."

If a man succeeds in his attempt, he calls it Purushartha. He says: "I really exerted much. I have succeeded." If he fails, the same man says: "What can I do, my friend? It is all Prarabdha. Without Him nothing can be done. Without God no atom can move, no leaf can wave in the air."

Prarabdha is only Purushartha of previous birth.

What is destiny after all? It is one's own make-up. You have created certain things. You can destroy them or undo things also. You are thinking in one way: "I am Mr. so and so. I am a Brahmin. I am a doctor. I am fatty. I am a householder." This is Prarabdha. You can change this particular mode of thinking. Think: "I am Brahman. I am Omnipotent. I am a witness or Sakshi. I am God. I am neither the body nor the mind. I am all-pervading Truth or pure Consciousness." This is Purushartha. You have got a particular way of writing in a vertical manner. This is Prarabdha. You can change that writing into a slanting way. This is Purushartha.

You sow an action and reap a tendency. You sow a tendency and reap a habit. You sow a habit and reap your character. You sow your character and reap your destiny. Therefore destiny is of your own creation. If you change your habits, you can become master of your destiny.

God never punishes nor gives rewards. He is not sitting with a rod to chastise people. Life is governed by fundamental divine laws. The law operates and man reaps the fruits of his actions.

No one can remain quiet even for a second. No one can become a fatalist. There is an urge or stimulus from within to work. That is the reason why Gita says: "Nor can anyone, even for an instant remain really actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature. The theory of Prarabdha cannot make any one a fatalist."

Lead a life outside your bodies. Stand aside and watch the activities of the mind and body. Be a Sakshi or Drishta like the umpire in a foot-ball match. This is Jnana. Train the physical body to obey you at all times. Keep it strong and healthy. Don't become a foolish Mayavadin. Understand Mayavada properly. Do not have Moha for the body. Be prepared to sacrifice it at any moment. When the Divine Call comes, sacrifice this body for a noble cause. This body is a boat or horse to take you to the goal or to cross the ocean of Samsara.

For a Bhakta it is all Prarabdha only. For, he is a man of self-surrender. He has to glorify the power of the Lord. For a Vedanti, it is all Purushartha only. For, he is a man of self-reliance. He has to glorify the power of his own strong will (Atma Bala). Both are correct from their own stand-points.

Each soul must fulfil the Divine Law (Karma) for gaining Divine Wisdom. Each soul must sit alone at the gate. No one can push him in. The Guru can lead him up to the gate. Everyone must fight his battle of self-purification, concentration and control of mind.

One philosopher says: "How does Purushartha bring results? How does Prarabdha operate?" It is very difficult to say.

People ask: "How is it that a good man is suffering in this world and a bad man is in an affluent state?" The answer is that in this life the good and bad deeds of a former life are expiated, Just as there is Prarabdha for the individual, so also there is Prarabdha for the world also. This is collective Prarabdha. There will be perfect peace and prosperity after commotion and agitation in the land. You are not in a position to analyse the acts of Nature because you have no knowledge of the laws of nature.

When there is increase of population in the land, when the food products cannot meet with the requirements of the people, the Divine Shakti removes the extra population through famine, epidemics, pestilence, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and war.

Chapter Four

GOD AND AVATARA

1. SAGUNA AND NIRGUNA ASPECTS OF GOD

That which is called Brahman in Upanishads and Paramatman in the Smritis is called Bhagavan in the Bhagavata.

My Lord Siva, whose heart is Hari is identical with Nirguna Brahman of Upanishads.

Just as air is formless and at the same time takes the form as of a cyclone, so also the formless Brahman can assume a form.

God is both with form (Sakara), like ice, for His Bhakta, and without form (Nirakara), like steam, for the Jnani.

Just as water can exist in two states, viz.,Nirakara (formless) in the form of H2 O, Sakara (with form) in the form of ice, so also Brahman is both Nirakara and Sakara. He can take a form also as an Avatara.

Microcosm is Pinda; macrocosm is Brahmanda. Samashti means sum-total. Vyashti means individual. A tree is Vyashti, while a grove is Samashti. A single match stick is Vyashti; a match box is Samashti. He who identifies with the macrocosmic causal body or the sum-total of all causal bodies of Jiva is Ishwar. He who identifies with the macrocosmic subtle body is Hiranyagarbha or Sutratma; with the microcosmic or individual subtle body is Taijasa. He who identifies with the macrocosmic or collective gross body is Virat or Vaishvanara; and with microcosmic or individual gross body is Vishwa. Ishwar Himself assumes the forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra through Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas and becomes the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. Brahma is included in Virat, Vishnu in Hiranyagarbha and Rudra in Ishwar.

Lord Krishna appeared as Para Brahman before the sages, as supreme Tattwa before the Yogins, as Lord of beauty before the Gopis, as warrior before the warriors, as a child before Vasudeva and Yashoda, as Lord of Death before Kamsa, as King of kings (Samrat) before the kings according to the view and understanding of the seer or subjecct. The object is the same. It appears different according to the view-point of the beholder.

The "Oversoul" of the Western philosophers is the Brahman of the Upanishads or Atma of the Vedantins. The Supreme Soul or Paranatman which is the support for the individual soul is the "Oversoul." The "Oversoul" is the "Substance" of Spinoza or the "Thing in itself" of Kant. The essence of Vedanta has slowly infiltrated into the minds of the Western philosophers and they have accepted now the existence of the one eternal principle or the immortal Soul which is distinct from body and mind.

Sri Ramanuja's Savisesha Brahman works. He is all-merciful. He gives rewards to virtuous persons. But Sri Sankara's Nirvisesha Brahman is quite indifferent (Udaseena). To be an Udaseena is the highest stage.

"I am Thine, O Lord! Thou art not I. The waves belong to the ocean, but the ocean is not the wave." This is the teaching of Ramanuja. This is Vishishtadwaita or qualified non-dualism.

Anthropomorphic conception of God is that in which man gives human attributes to God. Mohammedan conception of God is anthropomorphic.

The impersonal aspect (Nirakara, Nirguna) is called Brahman, or 'unknowable' by Herbert Spencer, 'will' by

Schopenhauer, Absolute Noumenon by some, 'substance' by Spinoza.

The personal aspect (Sakara) of that Being is termed 'Ishwara' or Allah, Hari, Jehova, Father in Heaven, Buddha, Siva, etc.

Just as vapour or steam is formless, so also God is formless in His unmanifested or transcendental state. He takes a form to please His devotees. He assumes a form for the pious worship of His Bhaktas. He gives Darshan to His devotees in the form in which they meditate. For a devotee who has Prema Nishtha, a form is necessary. When he develops Para Bhakti, the form will vanish away and he will become one with the all-pervading pure Consciousness.

Lord Krishna is the Prem aspect of Ishwara or the Lord. Lord Siva is the wisdom aspect of Ishwara. Devi is the Shakti aspect of Ishwara. Virat is the manifested aspect of Ishwara. Hiranyagarbha is the immanent aspect of Ishwara. Hanuman is the Rudra aspect of Lord Siva. Dattatreya is the combined aspect of (Trinity) of Ishwara. Brahma is the creative aspect of Ishwara. Vishnu is the preservative aspect of Ishwara. Siva is the destructive aspect of Ishwara. Meditate on any aspect you like, attain union with the Lord and cross this ocean of Samsara.

Vimal Kumari came to her husband's house after the first time. Her brother's name was Chandra. The dog of her husband's neighbour had the name Chandra also. The name of her husband's dog was Moti. Vimal Kumari's brother had an enemy and his name also was Moti. The two dogs Chandra and Moti were fighting. The husband of Vimal Kumari abused his neighbour's dog Chandra and praised his own dog Moti. Vimal Kumari thought that her husband was abusing her own brother and praising her brother's enemy. She was a bit annoyed towards her husband. Vimal Kumari was pained in her heart as she did not understand her husband properly. She was deluded by mere names. Even so, the Vaishnavites and the Saivites are pained in their hearts when they find the criticism of Hari and Siva in Siva Purana and Vishnu Purana respectively. Hari is criticised in Siva Purana to increase the student's faith in Lord Siva and vice versa. There is no other reason. Similar quarrels are occurring in the world daily on acount of delusion caused by play of sounds and names. A wise man goes above sounds and names and rests in that soundless and nameless Brahman.

If you identify yourself with the personal God or Saguna Brahman, you will see the world within yourself. Ishwara has this world within Himself. There is nothing outside Him. A Jiva separates himself on account of egoism and so sees the world outside. Because you see the world outside, there is attraction for objects. The attraction for all objects will die if one sees the world within.

A dry Pundit-Vedantin ignores Bhakti. He speaks ill of Bhakti. He says: "Bhakti cannot relieve human sufferings. Bhakti cannot give Mukti." This is a serious blunder. Bhakti can destroy all human sufferings and can give Krama Mukti. Sectarian Bhakta denies Advaita-Nirguna-Nirakara Brahman. He speaks ill of Jnana. He says: "I do not want a dry Brahman without any Rasa. I want my Leela-Krishna alone. There is nothing beyond Goloka." This is also a grave blunder. Both are petty-minded. Beyond Go-Loka, beyond Leela-Krishna, there exists Nirguna Adwaita Brahman, who is the support or substratum for Leela-Krishna. Leela-Krishna merges in Nirguna Brahman during cosmic Pralaya.

Though Sri Sankara had full highest Adwaitic, Nirguna Brahmic realisation, yet he says loudly: "My keen desire to fix my mind at the Lotus-Feet of Lord Krishna, my eager longing to wash His benign Feet with tears from my eyes is not gone."

Whether the owl accepts the presence of light or not, there is always light. Whether you accept the existence of God or not, He always exists. He is ever shining in the three periods of time. He exists before you begin to search Him. He is closer to you than your breath, nearer to you than your hands and feet.

Even if the tenant has not seen the Maha Raja, he knows that there is one Maha Raja who rules the State from the orderliness kept up throughout the State. Similarly even if you have not seen God face to face, you can know His existence from the order maintained in the universe.

When mind, speech, ears, eyes and other organs are asleep the Prana alone is awake. Who causes the vibration of Prana? Who is the support for this Prana? It is Brahman. He is the Yoni or womb for everything.

Who is making the physical body,—a toy made up of clay—dance in a variety of ways? Who is the wire-puller of this body? Find Him out.

You feel "I exist." This itself clearly proves that God exists. Existence is God or Brahman. You always feel despite your possessions and all sorts of comforts that you are in want of something. There is no sense of fullness. If you add to yourself the All-full God only, you will have fullness. When you do an evil action you are afraid. Your conscience pricks you. This also proves that God exists and witnesses all your thoughts and actions.

There is a village known Dagheta near Muttra. Sri Swami Krishnananda was doing Kirtan one night with his party on 10th October 1934. One lady, a devotee,who was much interested in Kirtan, locked her little girl in the house and went for the Kirtan. There was none else in the house beside the child. When she returned, she saw her child playing and laughing. Mother asked the child: "With whom are you playing, my child?" The child replied: "I am playing with this old man. Do you not see him?" The child repeated these words thrice. The mother was not able to see the old man. The old man, who was none else besides Lord Krishna, had disappeared. Where there is Bhakti and faith, the Lord is always there. Where there is Kama (passion), there is no Rama.

In front of Sankar Kutia, Meerut, where Sannyasins stay, there is a bungalow of Sankar Dayal, Advocate. Sankar Dayal has a daughter. She is a devoted kiddy. She does worship (Pooja) daily to Lord Krishna. This is all due to her previous virtuous Samskaras. She used to pluck flowers in the garden daily for worship. When she was plucking flowers one day in the early morning, a boy came to her with peacock feathers on head and said: "Child, repeat this Mantra." He gave some Mantra for Japa and disappeared. The boy was Lord Krishna only. This incident took place on 5th October 1934. Even in Kali Yuga, if you have even a minute trace of faith and devotion, the Lord is ever ready to give His Darshan.

In Farukabad (via) Shikohabad Junction, I met a boy aged 19 on November 14th, 1934. He was a Bhakta of Lord Siva. He was repeating OM Namassivaya for some months. He did not have Darshan of the Lord. He felt aggrieved on this score. One day he wanted to give up his life by some means or other. He did some violent measure. At once Lord Siva appeared in the midst of a blazing blue light. He disappeared immediately. The boy heard a voice: "Child, what boon do you want?" The boy replied: "I want your Darshan again for a second time." But Lord Siva did not appear before him for the second time. You can see the boy in Farukabad even now. Bhakta Deputy Collector Sri Bhagawat Prasad brought the boy to me in Saraswati Bhavan.

The Bhagawatas are of two kinds: (Aprateekalambanas who worship without any symbol, and who do not take the help of any symbol, (2) Prateekalambanas, those who take the help of symbol. The first class consists of Devas and others who see the Lord as all-pervading. All Devatas, one hundred among the Rishis, one hundred among the Gandharwas belong to this class of Adhikarins. The Prateekalambanas are of two kinds (1) Dehalambana and (2) Pratimalambana. Those who see the Lord in their body are Dehalambanas. The Rishis, etc., called Madhyama Adhikaris belong to this class. They see the Atman in the body. The Pratimalambanas are those who see God in an image, who cannot imagine Him without some form. Ordinary men belong to this class.

Why has Lord Krishna a blue body? Because blue colour indicates the all-pervading nature of God. Blue colour is Vyapaka.

Why has Lord Hari four hands? Four hands represent Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. Four hands denote that Lord Hari welcomes all from all quarters. He is of an all-embracive nature.

Lingam of Lord Siva signifies that Brahman is formless

(Nirakara). It points out as if showing with the finger that Brahman is one without a second.

Worship of Shakti or Devi is worship of Brahman only. Shakti and Shakta are one. Brahman and Devi are Abhinna (inseparable). They are identical. Worship of Rama includes worship of Sita also. Worship of Radha goes to Krishna also. Saivites worship Siva only. Shaktas worship Devi only. Some worship both Siva and Parvati.

In communion with the Lord, the opening and closing of the eyes cease. Inhalation and exhalation stop. Sankalpa and Vikalpa of the mind also cease. This s Unmani Avastha, the highest state of Raja Yogins. The name of the Lord Rama is an inexhaustible store-house for spiritual knowledge, for eternal life, eternal bliss and eternal satisfaction. The Ramanama is sacred, holy of holies. It is a destroyer of the sins of persons in this Kali Yuga (iron age). It is a spiritual food of aspirants at evry step of their spiritual march towards the atainment of God-consciousness or communion with the Lord.

Remember Lord Hari, the supreme Lord, the Teacher, the prime cause for all worlds, the destroyer of the darkness of Samsara. He pervades this whole universe. He Himself is without origin, but He is the origin of this universe. He is the first cause. He shines within the heart of all beings. He is the pure consciouness. He is the warp and woof of the web of this universe. He is the real, the eternal, the infinite, the transcendental, the unknown. Meditate on Him daily. Meditate on His attributes. Sing His Name. You will attain immortality and eternal bliss.

God is the Creator and Director of this Universe. He is the Indweller in all beings. He is the supporter of this world. He is the preserver and destroyer of this world. He is the governor and inner ruler. He is the Protector, Saviour and Redeemer. He is the bestower of supreme peace and immortality. He is the giver of Ojas (spiritual power), Tejas (divine splendour). Bala (power), Aishwarya (spiritual wealth), Yasas (fame), Arogya (health), Deergha Ayus (long life), Pushti (prosperity), Tushti (contentment), Santi (peace), Sreyas (emancipation), Vidya (divine wisdom), Moksha (liberation).

2. ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God is beyond cause and effect, time and space, and beyond the reach of mind and speech.

But yet he is the nearest of the nearest, the innermost dweller of the heart, the very life of all that lives and moves.

The cave of the heart is to be sought after by every aspirant for Self-realisation. The Supreme Self which is full of bliss abides in this cave.

God is hidden love. God is hidden power. God is hidden beauty. God is hidden light. Brahman is God of gods. Brahman is knowledge. Live a hidden life in the hidden God.

To define God is to deny God. You can give definition of a finite object only. How can you define the limitless or Infinite being, who is the source and ultimate cause for everything? If you define God, you are limiting the limitless one, you are confining Him within the concepts of mind. God is beyond the reach of gross mind, but He can be realised through meditation with a pure, subtle and one-pointed mind.

God is Truth. Go dis Love. God is light of lights. God is Peace. God is Knowledge. God is an embodiment of Bliss. God is Sat-chit-ananda, existence absolute, knowledge absolute and bliss absolute. God is Eternity.. God is Infinity. God is Avinasi, Supreme Vastu. God is all-pervading Essence or Substance. God is the only Sara-vastu. God is Infinite Beauty.

There is a maker for a pot or a table. So there must be a Creator for this marvellous world also. That Creator is God.

God created this universe by His own will and then entered into it. He manifests Himself in the mind and heart of every one. He is the first among the Devas. He is the Protector of the world.

A wicked man does a crime and enters the jail as a prisoner. He has no independence in the jail. He is a slave. Sometimes the king also enters the jail of his own sweet will to see the condition of the prisoners. He visits the jail in order to do good to the prisoners and redress their grievances. He is quite independent. If people ask: "Where is the King now?, the Private Secretary says: "The King is in the jail now." The criminal has entered the jail and the King also has entered the jail. But there is world of difference. Even so, the little Jiva takes birth in this world owing to the force of his desires and Karmas. He is swayed by ignorance. He has no independence. He is a slave of passions. He is a victim of Avidya. He is tossed hither and thither by the two currents, viz., Raga Dwesha (likes and dislikes) whereas the Lord takes His incarnation in this world as an Avatara, out of his own sweet will, in order to protect Dharma and the righteous persons and punish the unrighteous. He is quite independent. Maya is under His perfect control. He is Omnipotent and Omniscient. He has Sat-kama and Sat-sankalpa.

This body is a complicated machine. Even eminent doctors have not thoroughly understood the functions of the different organs of the body. They had no knowledge of the workings of the various endocrine glands some thirty years ago. Now they say, that the endocrine glands play a very vital part in the economy of nature. Still they are experimenting and studying about the nature and working of this complex machine. If you can get knowledge of the Driver of the machine, then only you can acquire complete knowledge of this human machine. That Driver is God or Antaryamin (Inner Ruler).

Truth is God. It is Satya Vastu (real thing). It is Satyam (Truth), Nityam (eternal), Avinasi (imperishable), Nirvikara (unchanging), Ekarasa (one homogeneous essence). It is self-existent (Swayambhu), self-luminous (Swayamprakash), independent at all times (Svatantra). It has no beginning, middle or end (Anadi, Anantam). It exists in the past, present and future. It is self-knowledge (Chit, Samvit, Vijnana, Prajnana). It is causeless. It is beyond time, space and causation. It is one. It is Akhanda, Aparichhinna.

God and 'peace' are synonymous terms. God is very near to those who are free from lust, anger, greed and egoism.

God has no desire. He is Paripoorna (self-contained). He creates this world for His sporting (Lila). It is His Swabhava.

God is the totality of all that exists, both animate or inanimate, sentient or insentient. He is free from ills and limitations. He is Omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He has no beginning, middle or end. He is the Indweller in all beings. He controls from within. God, immortality, freedom, perfection, peace, bliss, love are synonymous or convertible terms.

Sa paryagachhukram akayam avranam
Asnaviram Suddham apapaviddham,
Kavirmanishee paribhuh Swayambhur yatha
tathyato arthan vyadadhat saswateebhyah samabhyah.
(Ish Upanishad, Mantra 8).

He pervades all, resplendent, bodiless, scathless, having no muscles, pure unsmitten by sin; far-seeing, omniscient, transcendent, self-sprung, he duly allotted to the various eternal creators their respective functions.

God is Omnipotent (Sarva Shaktiman). But he is impotent in the sense that He cannot deny his own existence.

The great King cannot be seen by the ordinary persons or the agricultural peasants. But they see daily the Dewan, the Tahsildar and other officials. Through this they know that there is a King who is the supreme Ruler of the state. Even so, the Supreme Self who is the source for everything, who is the inner Ruler of all beings cannot be seen. But you can infer His Existence by looking at the sun, the moon, the stars, and other marvellous objects of this universe, which bespeak of His Supreme Glory and ineffable splendour.

Colour and symmetry give beauty to the physical body. Beauty of body is of decaying nature. Hence it is illusory. But divine beauty is undecaying and real. God is beauty of beauties. He is the fountain head for beauty. He is an embodiment of beauty. He is beauty Itself.

You have great love for your hair on the head. You daily comb it nicely and apply hair oil but you throw the same hair if it falls in a cup of milk. You dislike to touch it. In loving the hair, you love your own Self only. The hair appears to be beautiful and attractive because of its association with the body of the Jiva and with the Chaitanya or Consciousness that is at the back of this body. If you see a silk saree in a shop it is not attractive, but when it is on the body of a lady, it is very attractive and beautiful, because it is connected now with the Chaitanya. This gives the clue that the God exists and that the God is an embodiment of beauty.

3. THE GRACE OF THE LORD

Bhakti is not obtained through effort or action. It is obtained through Grace and mercy of the Prabhu (Lord). It is Kriya Sadhya and not Kriya Sadhya.

These three things are rare indeed and are due to the Divine Grace only—viz., a human birth, a longing for liberation and the protecting care of a Satguru perfected sage). But a virtuous noble soul will get these things. Swami Vivekananda, Gorakhnath, Bhartruhari and Nityananda had these three rare things.

Even if you make effort through crores of Kalpas, you will not have Darshan of the Lord. But if you obtain the mercy, you will have His Darshan in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, surrender your will at His lotus-feet and say with sincerity: "Oh Lord, have mercy on me."

Through the Grace of the Lord only one can get the four means of salvation, a realised Guru for guidance and other means such as food, abode, clothing, etc. Therefore worship of the Lord is absolutely necessary.

The Grace of the Lord is an antidote to all sorts of fear. He who has the Grace of the Lord will be able to cross the ocean of Samsara. Lord's Grace is a passport to enter the Kingdom of illimitable bliss. Obtain His Grace through self-surrender, pure love and worship.

Even if the most impure object is thrown into the fire, the fire renders it pure and imparts to it its own lustre and form. Even so, the Lord purifies even the worst sinner and makes him like Himself. This is the nature of the Lord.

He who loves God, who rejoices in Him alone, who delights in Him alone who serves Him, who adores Him is a child of God. He is a real Bhagawata. All Siddhis and Riddhis will roll under his feet.

The rich man lives in a mansion, moves in a car and has plenty of food, but he is not happy, he suffers from dyspepsia, diabetes and blood-pressure. His mind is filled with cares, worries and anxieties. He is weak. He cannot eat sumptuous food. The doctor has prescribed for him arrow-root Kanjee, barley water and force. He has no children. A poor labourer has good health, vigorous appetite, power of endurance and plenty of children. But he is homeless. He has very little to eat. He is clad in rags. This is the keeping up of the balance in the economy of nature. The Lord bestows upon you whatever you ask. If you want wealth, He gives you wealth, if you want health, He gives you the same. If you want Moksha, He gives you Moksha.

Mimamsakas hold that Karma or work but not Ishwara gives the fruits of one's actions. They say that Karma itself can give results at a future time. This is wrong. Ishwara alone can give the fruits of one's own works. Karma is insentient or non-intelligent and short-lived. It has no power of bringing about results at some future time. Even the super-sensuous extraordinary principle Apurva which is produced by the Karma before it is destroyed is of non-intelligent nature. It cannot act unless moved by some intelligent Being (Ishwara). Ishwara is the bestower of the fruits of actions as He is the cause of the actions even.

God looks to the heart of the devotee rather than to his thoughts or the words in which his homage is expressed.

The mother beats her son when he does some mischief. Has she any hatred towards her son? No. She beats him in order to correct and educate him. Even so God punishes the evil-doers in order to correct and educate them. He is neither impartial nor cruel.

Love God as Radha did. This is the highest form of worship. Follow in the footsteps of Radha. Feel for Lord Krishna like Radha. The love will gradually develop. You will attain immortality and God-consciousness.

Ahalya says: "O all-merciful Lord Rama! Salutations unto Thee. Through Thy benign Grace, I have assumed my original form. Through Thy mercy alone the stone became a human being. Thou art ocean of compassion and love. The all-pervading Nirguna Brahman who is within and without or the Virat was not able to transform the stone into my original form. You alone were able to do so. Therefore Thou art even superior to the Nirguna Brahman and Virat. Prostrations unto Thee. O Lord, my Saviour and Protector. Glory unto Thee. Glory unto Thy Name, O Lord Rama."

Thou canst not rest in peace without Ram. How fortunate and happy is that man who remembers Him and sings His Name! The devotee of Ram is free from all cares, worries, fears sorrows, pains and tribulations. Ram takes care of his body. Ram attends to his physical wants. Awake and see. How merciful is He! Cling to His Lotus-Feet.

Ravana propitiated Lord Siva by his hymns. Pushpadanta pleased Lord Siva by his celebrated Stotra: "Siva Mahimna Stotra" (which is even now sung by all devotees throughout India) and obtained all Aiswaryas or Siddhis and Mukti. The glory of the Stotras of Siva is indescribable. Why do not you all sing the hymns of Lord Siva and obtain His Grace and salvation not in the unknown future, but right now in this very second? You can please Lord Siva easily. Fast on Sivaratri. If you cannot do this, take milk and fruits only. Keep perfect vigil the whole night and sing His Stotras. May the blessings of Lord Siva be upon you all!

The Kurma Purana says: "Water is able to quench the fire, the presence of the sun to dispel darkness and the repetition of the Names of Devi to destroy the multitude of sins in the Kali age." The Brahma Purana says: "Those who worship the Supreme Shakti whether regularly or irregularly are not entangled in Samsara. There is no doubt, they are the liberated souls."

Prakriti is preparing you for the spiritual battle in a variety of ways. She is making your mind and body as fit instruments for Her unhampered play. Feel this. Be grateful to the Mother always.

Think of the Lord alone. Think of nothing, of none but your Beloved. See nothing else save your Ishtam. Love God alone. Live for Him alone. Serve Him in all names and forms. Worship Him in all names and forms. Sweet Brindaban, lovely Brindaban, Heavenly Brindaban, Sparkling waters of Jumna with Kadamba flowers and forests are within you. Look within. Hear the inner music of the soul, the music of Lord Krishna's mysterious flute and become one with Him.

The eyes of Lord Krishna serve as a boat to take you to the other shore of fearlessness and immortality. Fix your mind on His eyes.

Krishna comes from the root 'Krish'—to draw. Krishna means that which draws everything to itself. What could be the thing which attracts so powerfully and subdues. It is absolute Love. Krishna is absolute Love.

How merciful is Lord Krishna. He had the Bhav of mother even for Pootana who came to kill Him and gave her salvation.

How sweet is Lord Krishna's Name! How powerful is His Name! The Name of Lord Krishna is nectar. It is a boat to cross this terrible ocean of Samsara. It is a mighty weapon to kill this Rakshasa-mind.

Lord Krishna is Sat-chit-ananda Vigraha or the embodiment of knowledge and bliss. He has no beginning or end. He is the cause of all causes. He is the shelter, support and the Lord of all.

Lord Krishna is styled as one who steals butter, because he used to eat butter stealthily in the houses of the Gopis on account of his extreme love for them. But He really steals the evil thoughts of devotees and fills their minds with divine thoughts. This stealing of butter was a sort of sporting (Lila) when he was a boy, to instil delight in the hearts of Gopis who were his devotees. The Gopis liked this immensely. They were eagerly expecting, when would Krishna come and eat their butter. He really steals or captivates their hearts and minds makes them forget the world, draws their minds towards His blessed feet and makes them enjoy the everlasting peace and bliss. He steals the letter 'Da' in 'Dasoham' of devotees and makes them feel the right significance of the Vedantic formula 'Soham' (I am He) or the identity with the Supreme Self. Lord Krishna says in Gita: "I give my devotees the Yoga of discrimination." Chap. IX-10 How merciful is Lord Krishna! Glory to Him and His Name.

Who can describe the beauty of Lord Krishna? The lustre of his face excels the lustre of crores of suns. He is the beauty of beauties. He is an embodiment of beauty.

"As by watering of a tree at the root, all its trunk, branches and twigs get enlivened, and as the senses are gratified by the feeding of the Prana or life energy with food, so also the worshipping of Lord Krishna or Achyuta gratifies all the gods. (Bhagwata S.K. 4 Ch. 21—127).

Lord Krishna had played various parts during His stay in the world. He drove the chariot of Arjuna. He was an excellent statesman. He was a Master-musician. The music of His flute thrilled the hearts of Gopis and all. He was a cowherd in Nandagopa and Gokula. He exhibited miracles even when He was a child and a boy. He killed Kaliya and showed Viswaroop to His mother. He did Rasa Lila, the secrets of which can only be understood by devotees like Narada, Gauranga, Radha and Gopis. He taught the supreme truths of Yoga and Vedanta to Arjuna and Uddhava. That is the reason why he is regarded as an Avatara with sixteen Kalas or rays.

4. CAUSE FOR THE DESCENT OF AVATARA

Avataras descend from Karya Brahman (Hiranyagarbha) or Brahma, Vishnu. Siva. There cannot be any descent of Avatara direct from Karana Brahman (Ishwara).

All Avataras come either from Brahma, Vishnu or Siva. They cannot descend directly from Ishwara.

The Bhakta desires to see His Ishta Devata in human form. This is the cause for Avatara. That is the reason why the formless Brahman is forced to assume a human form to please His devotees. The cause of the descent of Avatara is due to the shedding of tears by the sincere devotees.

There is descent of God for the ascent of man. Whenever there is a catastrophe in the land, whenever there is unrighteousness, God comes down on the earth plane to establish Dharma. He takes human form when He comes down on the physical plane. He is called an Avatar. Avatars are of various kinds, Poorna Avatar (full), Amsa Avatar (Part), Avesh Avatar, Lila Avatars of Virat Purusha for the preservation of the universe, etc.

God Almighty does send now and then messengers to the world to disseminate Bhakti far and wide and to stir people in the spiritual path. Lord Gauranga, Kabir Das, Ram Das, Goswami, Tulsidas were all His sweet, sincere messengers. How kind, affectionate and merciful is God! O sceptics, materialists atheists! When will you open your eyes and ears? Wake up! Do not delay even a second. God of death is opening his jaws to devour you. Run to Him with folded hands, with all Bhav for refuge and say: "O God, Have Mercy."

Some people say: "How can we take Krishna as the Lord or Bhagawan? He took birth and died. He is only a man." This is a false statement. This is the utterance of an ignorant child. Lord Krishna only manifested Himself for the time being to do Loka Sangraha work (the solidarity or the well-being of the humanity) and then disappeared. Lord Krishna is Lord Hari Himself. There is no doubt of this. He had a Chinmaya body. His body was not made of flesh. Have full trust in Him. He will deliver you from the round of births and deaths. Respect His Name: OM Namo Bhagawate Vasudevaya" and sing His Kirtan: Sri Krishna Govinda Hare Murare, He Natha Narayana Vasudeva".

Sometimes the king visits the jail and enters the cell of a prisoner to see how matters are getting on in the prison. He does this for the good of the prisoners. He is quite independent and yet out of his own free will he himself enters the cell. Even so an Avatar puts on a fleshy body out of his own free will for the ascent of man. He is quite independent and has absolute control over Maya like the King, while Jiva is a slave of Avidya so long as he has no Self-realisation.

A Deva or an angel or spirit can materialise and take a physical form. This materialisation is of three kinds *viz.*, full materialisation, partial materialisation wherein the form is not visible though tangible, partial materialisation wherein the form is tangible but visible. A materialised angel or the materialised spirit of your departed friend can shake hands with you nicely.

If you come across a Devata, you can notice that the feet of the Devata will not touch the ground. The eyes will be quite steady. There will be no shutting and closing of the eye-lids.

5. IDOL WORSHIP

Idol or Murthy (Vigraha), Sun, Fire, Water, Ganges, Saligram, Linga are all symbols or Prateekas of God which help the aspirants to attain one-pointedness of mind and purity of heart. A symbol is absolutely indispensable for fixing the mind. The Christains also have got the symbol 'cross'. A gross mind needs a concrete symbol as a prop or Alambana; a subtle mind requires an abstract symbol. Even a Vedantin has the symbol of OM for fixing the wandering mind. In the beginning concentration or meditation is not possible without a symbol.

The devotee superimposes on the concrete idol the Lord and His attributes. He does Shodasopachara for the idol, the sixteen kinds of paying respects or service to the Lord such as Padyam (water for washing feet), Arghyam, Asan (seat), Snan (bathing), offering clothes, Achamana (water for sipping), applying sandal paste, offering flowers (Archana), burning incense, waving of lights and camphor, Maha Naivedyam, etc. The wandering mind is fixed now in this form of worship. The aspirant gradually feels the nearness of the Lord. He attains purity of heart and slowly annihilates his egoism.

Even in worshipping a small idol, he has to repeat the Purusha Sukta and to think of the Virat Purusha with countless heads, countless eyes, countless hands, who extends beyond the universe, and of the Lord or Atma who dwells in the hearts of all beings.

For a Bhakta or a sage, there is no such thing as Jada or insentient matter. Everything is Vasudeva or Chaitanya—Vasudevah Sarvam Iti. The devotee beholds actually the

Lord in the idol. Narsi Mehta was put to the test by a Raja. The Raja said: "O Narsi, if you are a sincere devotee of Lord Krishna, if as you say the idol is Lord Krishna Himself, let this idol move." According to the prayer of Narsi Mehta, the idol moved. The sacred Bull Nandi before Siva's idol took the food offered by Tulsidas. The Murti played with Mira Bai. It was full of life and Chaitanya for her.

How sublime is Hindu philosophy and Hindu mode of worship! It does not stop or end with worship of idol alone. The Sadhak is taken step by step to higher stages of devotion and Samadhi or communion through the worship of the idol. Though he worships the idol, he has to keep before his mental eye the all-pervading Lord. He has to feel His Presence in His heart and all objects. The ways and rules of worship, Pooja-Vidhi and the secrets of worship that are described in the Hindu scriptures are scientifically accurate and highly rational. It is only ignorant people who have not studied the scriptures, who have not associated with the devotees and great souls vilify worship of idols or Murtis.

Many English educated persons do not attach any importance to Prasad when they get it from the Mahatma. This is a serious misake. Prasad is a great purifier. As they are brought up in the Western style of living, they have imbibed the spirit of Westerners and forgotten the spirit of the true children of Indian Rishis of yore. Live for a week in Brindaban or Ayodhya or Benares or Pandarpur. You will realise the glory and the miraculous effects of Prasad. Many incurable diseases are cured. Many sincere devotional aspirants get wonderful spiritual experiences from mere Prasad alone. Prasad is a panacea. Prasad is a spiritual elixir. Prasad is the Grace of the Lord. Prasad is a cure-all and an ideal 'pick-me-up'. Prasad is an embodiment of Shakti. Prasad is Divinity in manifestation.

Devotees of Lord Krishna should feel that every form is the form of Lord Krishna. They should not change this Bhav or mental attitude, even if a murderer appears before them to kill them. If they are established in this Bhav, the nature of the murderer will be changed or some other man will kill the murdrer. If the Bhav changes, they should cultivate it again and again.

Feel His Presence always. Recognise His presence everywhere. Carry His presence wherever you walk. Remember Him always. Live in Him. You need not read many books. You need not roam about in search of Gurus. You need not stand on your head for 12 years. You need not do Aswini Mudra to open the Kundalini. I have given you the essence of all Sadhanas. It is the gist of all Vedas. Practise it. Believe me. It is very easy. It will surely give you Moksha. I assure you.

Those who worship Hiranyagarbha go to Brahmaloka or Satyaloka. They wait there for the life-time of Brahma. When the Brahmanda gets dissolved during the Pralaya, they enter the Supreme Self or Para Brahman along with Hiranyagarbha. Then only they lose their sense of individuality. Hiranyagarbha Upasana is the worship of the life-aspect of Ishwara.

Meditation on Saguna Brahman wards off calamities. The devotee gets powers though he does not want them. Siddhis roll under his feet. He gets emancipation by successive steps. This is called Krama Mukti or progressive emancipation in contra-distinction to the Sadhya Mukti or immediate emancipation attained by a Jnani. The devotee goes to Brahmaloka first and then enters into Nirguna Brahman.

This is called Krama Mukti. The Jnani is absorbed into Nirguna Brahman directly. This is the difference.

Saguna Upasakas or those who meditate on the image of the Lord should do Tratak first with open eyes till they can visualise a clear-cut, well-defined picture. Later on they can visualise the picture with closed eyes. The picture must be very pleasing to the mind and the eyes. It should have a good, agreeable background. When you have created a strong mental image of your Lord in the mind by continuous practice of meditation on one form, you should not disturb the mental image by changing the picture. Stick to the same picture and strengthen and feed the mental image through repeated practice of Tratak, visualisation and constant meditation on the form. Through force of habit the same mental image will appear quite easily in your mind. Sometimes you may change even your Mantra or formula when the mind is tired or wants variety, but do not change your mental image or Bhav.

Do not bother yourself if you are not able to have perfect visualisation of the picture of the Lord with the closed eyes. Continue your practice vigorously and regularly. You will succeed. What is wanted is Prem for the Lord. Cultivate this more and more. Let it flow unceasingly, spontaneously. This is more important than visualisation.

A piece of ordinary white paper or coloured paper has no value. You throw it away. But if there is stamp or picture of the King or Emperor on the paper (currency notes), you keep it safe in your money purse or trunk. Even so an ordinary piece of stone has no value for you. You throw it away. But if you behold the stone Murti of Lord Krishna at Pandharpur or any other Murti in shrines, you bow your head with folded hands, because there is the stamp of the Lord on the stone. The devotee superimposes on the stone Murthi his own Beloved and all the attributes of the Lord. Image worship is very necessary for beginners.

Even by worshipping a Pratima (idol) Ishwara is very much pleased. The Pratima is made up of five elements. Five elements constitute the body of the Lord. The idol remains as an idol. But the worship goes to the Lord. There is nothing wrong in worshipping an idol in the beginning. You must super-impose God and His attributes on the idol. You must think of the Antar-Atma that is hidden in the idol.

In Bhava Samadhi the mind of the devotee is highly elevated through pure emotion and devotion. He forgets the body and the world. His mind is wholly absorbed in the Lord.

Hear the divine whisper in silence. Realise the power of faith. Feel God's sustaining Grace. Know the way of escape. Build the shrine of love or the temple of devotion in your heart. Enter the silence. Enjoy the life transcendent.

Forget the universe, forget the body, forget everything. Meditate on the glory of His Name. Be fixed in His Name. Merge yourself in His Name. His Name saves millions from the round of births and deaths. Therefore develop taste (Ruchi) and love for His Name. You cannot live on bread alone, but you can live on Lord Krishna's Name. All the divine potencies or Shaktis are hidden in His Name. Awaken the Mantra-Chaitanya that is hidden in His Name by constant repetition and have everlasting union with Him.

God is just. He punishes the evil-doers to turn them into the right path, to corect and educate them. He does not want His children to repeat the same evil act. This is His mercy. This is His love.

The ways of God are very mysterious. Pain, suffering, disease, loss, disappointment, failure are His blessings in disguise to strengthen His children and take them to His side. My dear Ram, learn His ways and become wise. Do not get ruffled in mind by trifling incidents in life. Grow strong. Evolve.

God deprives one of his wealth, wife, son, etc., if He wants to take him to His Lotus-Feet. Don't grumble, my dear Prem! Say with boldness: "Thy will be done, O Lord!" and rejoice. Have perfect trust in Him. Exert sincerely and leave the rest to God.

You need not be depressed on any score. By Tapas, you can achieve anything. In the ninth chapter of Gita, 31 Sloka, Lord Krishna gives strong word of assurance: *Kaunteya Pratijaneehi na me bhaktah pranasyati*—O Son of Kunti! Know thou for certain that My devotee perisheth never. Always be cheerful. Where is the room for lamentation when you are a devotee of Lord Krishna. He bestows every gift on His Bhaktas. Go on with your Sadhana. Spend your time well. Your straightforward nature (Arjava) and simplicity are great spiritual assets for you. A bright future awaits you. Plod on. Apply diligently. Increase your charity. Charity covereth a multitude of sins. It is a great purifier of heart: *"Yajno danam tapaschaiva pavanani maneeshinam"* (Gita Chap. XVIII-5).

Your spiritual advancement is very poor as you have not strictly followed my spiritual instructions. Earnest efforts are greatly wanting in you. Had you been sincere and regular in the spiritual Sadhana, you ought to have had glimpses of the Divine Grace in some form or other.

The Gopis of Brindavan were wonderful devotees of Lord Krishna. They totally surrendered themselves unto the Lord. Lord Krishna played on His Flute on a moon-lit night. The Gopis rushed forth immediately to where their Lover was. Their minds were absorbed in Krishna. They forgot everything when they heard the flute.

The lane of love is extremely narrow indeed. It cannot contain two. Where there is 'I', the Lord is not. Where there is the Lord, this 'I' ceases to be.

6. MANASIC POOJA

Manasic Pooja or mental worship is more powerful than external Pooja of the Murti with flowers, etc. Arjuna thought that Bhima was not doing any kind of worship. He was proud of his external worship to Lord Siva. He offered Bael leaves. But Bhima offered to Lord Siva mentally the Bael leaves of all the Bael trees of the whole world. He was doing Manasic Pooja of Lord Siva. The attendants of Lord Siva were not able to remove the Bael leaves offered by Bhima from the head of Siva. Arjuna once saw a large band of people carrying baskets of Bael leaves. He thought within himself that these leaves must be those offered by him to the Lord and questioned them thus: "Brothers, wherefrom do you carry these Bael leaves." They replied: "O Arjuna, these leaves are offered to our Lord by Bhima through his Manasic Pooja." Arjuna was struck with wonder. He came to know that Manasic Pooja was more powerful than the external worship and that Bhima was a better devotee than himself.

He who has done Pooja with flowers and other articles of worship for some time can do mental worship. In mental Pooja the devotee offers mentally all offerings to the Lord. This is advanced form of worship.

Manasic Pooja can be done by advanced students. Beginners should certainly do worship with flowers, sandal paste, incense, etc. You will have more concentration when you do Manasic Pooja. Mentally enthrone the Lord in Singhasan seat with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, etc. Offer Him a seat. Apply sandal paste to His forehead and body. Offer Arghyam, Madhuparka, and various sorts of flowers, clothes, etc. Burn incense. Wave lights. Burn camphor. Offer various kinds of fruits, sweetmeats, and Maha Naivaidyam. Offer to the Lord the fruits of the whole world.

Do not be miserly even in Manasic Pooja. In Manasic Pooja one man offered only one stale plantain fruit and a handful of gram. A miserable miser! Even in Manasic Pooja he cannot be very generous and liberal. This world abounds with such deplorable misers. In the end mentally repeat: "*Kayena vacha manasendriyairva, Buddhyatmanava Prakriteh swabhavat Karomi yadyat sakalam parasmai Narayanayeti samarpayami.*"—Whatever action I do by the body, by speech, by the mind, by the senses, by the intellect or by my own nature, I offer all of them to the supreme Lord Narayana". Also say "OM Tat Sat Brahmarpanamastu". This will purify your heart and remove the taint of expectation of reward.

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Chapter Five

BHAKTI YOGA

1. WHAT IS BHAKTI ?

Bhakti comes from the word "Bhaj" which means 'to be attached or devoted to'. It is pure unselfish love mixed with reverence.

Bhakti is the basis of all religious life. Bhakti destroys Vasanas and egoism. Bhakti elevates the mind to magnanimous heights. Bhakti is the master-key to open the chambers of wisdom. Bhakti culminates in Jnana. Bhakti begins in two and ends in one. Those who fight on the point: "Which is superior Bhakti or Jnana?" are groping in darkness. They have not understood the real Tattwa. Para Bhakti and Jnana are one.

Bhakti or devotion in the form of Anuraga or attachment to the Lord leads to the highest good or the attainment of God-realisation. The stronger the attachment, the quicker the realisation.

Prahlad says: "O Lord Hari, may I have the same sort of profound abiding love for Thee, which the worldly people cherish for the fleeting sensual objects of this universe. May not that Bliss disappear from my heart, when I think of Thee." What a beautiful definition of Bhakti. These thoughts have emanated from the core of Prahlad's heart. They are charged with intense feeling and devotion.

It is easy to have a thing that is beautiful. God is Beauty of beauties. God is the source for all beauties. God is an embodiment of undecaying beauty. So it is very easy to love God.

If you are attached to a finite, perishable object as wife or son, you become miserable when your wife or son dies. But if you are attached to God you get eternal, infinite Bliss and peace. A Bhakta aspires, therefore, to something imperishable and infinite.

Without love man's life is empty. Without love man lives in vain. Love is vital. It is all-pervading. Love is a great power. Love is the sap of life. Give love. It shall be given unto you. Cultivate this love through service, Japa, Sat-sang and meditation.

Human love is all hollow. It is mere animal attraction. It is passion. It is carnal love. It is selfish love. It is ever changing. It is all hypocrisy and mere show. The wife does not care for her husband when he is in the role of unemployment. She frowns at him. The husband dislikes his wife when she loses her beauty on account of some chronic disease. You can find real, lasting love in God alone. His love knows no change.

A selfish man loves his body only. Then he extends his love to his wife, children and friends. When he evolves a bit, he begins to love his own caste people and those who belong to his own district. Afterwards he loves people of his own province. His heart further expands. Then he loves the people of his own country. In the long run, he develops the feeling of universal brotherhood. He begins to love any man in any part of the world.

Devotion is the seed. Faith is the root. Service of Bhagawatas is the shower. Self-surrender is the flower. Communion with the Lord is the fruit. This is the path of Bhakti Yoga.

In Bhakti Yoga, no learning, no deep erudition of Vedas is needed. What is wanted is a devotional, sincere, heart. Any one can sing or repeat His Name. Tukaram was an illiterate peasant. He could not even sign his name. Through devotion and grace of Lord Krishna he had super-intuitional knowledge. His famous Abhangas or songs are texts for M.A. students in Bombay University. Sree Ramakrishna Paramahamsa also was illiterate. When he lived in Dakshineswar temple, he got divine knowledge through the Grace of Mother Kali and Adwaita Guru Sri Swami Totapuri. From a careful study of the lives of these two saints, it is quite clear that there is the fountain of knowledge within the heart and that any one can tap this source through sincere devotion.

"I bow to Lord Narayan or Lord Siva or Lord Krishna". This is Bhakti Yoga. "I am the Self in all." This is Jnana Yoga.

Men in their social and domestic relations develop love, affection, Prem, Preeti, admiration, reverence, awe and other sentiments. This cannot serve the purpose of life. It is only when one develops devotion or Bhakti for God that one's real purpose of life is gained. Devotion is the consummation of the above emotions.

Some regard Upasana does not practise Pratyahara. He tries to get himself drowned in the Prem of the Lord. He attempts to fix his mind either at His lotus-feet or charming face. Consequently Pratyahara follows unconsciously. A Raja Yogi practises Pratyahara deliberately. A Jnana Yogi does not practise Pratyahara, but tries to identify himself with the hidden self in all objects. He tries to remove the veil that covers the Atma within the objects by the force of Vedantic Nididhyasan. He negates the names and forms and identifies himself with the all-pervading hidden consciousness.

A sage says: "This world has come out of Ananda (bliss); it subsists in Ananda and it dissolves in Ananda." A devotee says: "This world has come out of love; it subsists in love and it dissolves in love." In Ananda love is hidden.

The sage loves his own Atma. He is devoted to his Atma. In love Ananda is hidden. The devotee loves his Beloved and dances in joy.

Dwaita (dualism), Vishishtadwaita (qualified monism) are different stages or different rungs in the philosophical ladder. The highest summit is Adwaita. Tre realisation of Dwaitins and Visishtadwaitins is also quite true and correct from their stand-points. A little more Sadhana and understanding will make them land in pure Adwaitic realisations.

In Bhakti Yoga, there are three things, viz., Lover, Beloved and Love. As soon as the Lover knows that he is identical with the Beloved, there is an end for Bhakti. Jnana dawns. Duality vanishes. Who is to love whom now?

According to Adwaita Vedanti, devotion is constant thinking on the formula, "I am he" or "I am Brahman".

A Bhakta says: "Get knowledge of God first. Then only you will get Prem, love or devotion for Him." A Jnani says in the other way: "Knowledge is the fruit of Bhakti or devotion.

Perfect knowledge is all love. Perfect love is all knowledge.

Just as the taking of food brings Tushti (satisfaction), Pushti (nourishment for the body), and cessation of hunger, so also Bhakti brings Vairagya and Jnana at the same time.

Bhakti destroys egoism and Vasanas just as the fire destroys the wood. The Bhaktas do not care for Mukti even. They prefer always to talk with each other about the Lord, to serve the Bhagawatas, the poor and the sick, to sing His Name and glories, to do prostrations unto Him, to sacrifice everything unto Him, to take Him as their Supreme Goal and to do unconditional, unreserved self-surrender unto Him.

Mukti comes to them unasked. Mukti is their hand-maid. The Vibhutis of the Lord, Siddhis and Riddhis are theirs though they do not want them.

Unswerving Bhakti or devotion to the Lord and the company of Bhagwatas are the means to attain Supreme Bliss.

Pooja is worship of the Lord. This is Upasana which helps the devotee to sit near the Lord or to commune with Him. It purifies the heart and steadies the mind. It fills the mind with Suddha Bhav and Prem or pure love for the Lord. It gradually transmutes man into a divine being.

Have intense love towards Lord Krishna's name (Bhagavan-Nam-Prem). All your miseries will come to an end. Draupadi took refuge in His Name when she was in great distress. The Lord saved her.

Faith or Bhakti in Hari alone can bring salvation. Build up a golden temple within your heart. Lord Krishna wants your sincere devotion only.

God is love. Love redeems unifies and elevates.

Love is represented by the gift. Joy is represented by singing.

There is no virtue higher than love. There is no treasure higher than love. There is no Dharma higher than love. There is no religion higher than love, because love is God and God is love. Love purifies. Love transmutes. Love redeems. Love subdues. Therefore kindle the light of love in your heart, O Beloved Prem.

There is no power greater than love. Out of love the formless Brahman takes the form of Lord Hari with four hands to please His devotees. The Lord runs after His devotees with food and water in His hands even into the forests.

It was love that forced Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Eknath and many other saints to teach the secrets of scriptures to mankind. Love is a magic rod in the hands of a devotee. He wields it in a majestic manner and brings the whole world under his sway. He who is endowed with pure love is the real emperor of the three worlds.

Prem is intense, selfless pure love to the Lord. Prem is concentrated love. Prem brings the devotee face to face with the Lord. Bhakti culminates in Prem. Prem is Divine Nectar. Prem destroys pains and sorrows and makes one immortal, blissful and peaceful. It is very dufficult to describe the nature of Prem. You will have to experience it yourself. Cultivate it through Japa, Smaran, Kirtan, Sat-sang, prayer, service of devotees and study of Ramayana, Bhagawata, etc.

Love in religion is a Science. It is the out-pouring of the heart of a devotee on his Beloved. It is the natural outcome of a devotee when he is freed from the impurities and distractions of his mind. There is Anand in love. Love is a mysterious divine force that transforms man into Divinity. It is the love which sets up a real communion with the Lord.

The tendency to love is natural and is implanted in the hearts of all persons. There is in fact no person of any kind who has not a natural aptitude to love and to be moved by love. You will have to develop this natural emotion of love to a considerable degree. You must purify it by destroying selfishness of all sorts. You must make it universal.

The world's need to-day is the message of Love. Kindle the light of love in your heart. Love all. Include all creatures in the warm embrace of your love. Nations can be united by pure love only. World war can be put to an end by mutual love only. The League of Nations cannot do much.

Love is a mysterious divine glue that unites the hearts of all. It is a Divine magical healing balm of very high potency. Charge every action with pure love. Kill cunningness, greed, crookedness and selfishness. It is extremely cruel to take away the lives of others by using poisonous gas. This is a capital sin. The scientist who prepares the gas in the laboratory will be punished by the Lord. Forget not the day of judgment. What will you say to the Lord then, O ye mortals, who run after power, dominions and wealth? Have a clean conscience and a loving heart. You will enter the Kingdom of God.

Develop universal love. This will help you to live peacefully with all men and all creatures. Love and peace are inseparable. Wherever there is love, there is peace and wherever there is peace there is love.

Develop a heart that will burst into tears of joy at the Name of the Lord. Allow the waves of love to arise constantly in your heart. Feel the warmth of the Divine embrace. Bask in the sunshine of Divine love. Taste the bliss of the eternal. Drink deep the nectar of divine love.

Do you really want God? Do you really thirst for His Darshan? Have you got real spiritual hunger? You may deliver thrilling lectures on Bhakti. You may write several volumes on Bhakti Yoga and yet you may not possess a grain of devotion. He who thirsts for Darshan of God will develop love. Unto him, He will reveal Himself. God is a question of supply and demand. If there is sincere demand for God, the supply willl come at once.

In Bhakti Marga five things are indispensably requisite. (1) Bhakti should be of a Nishkamya type. (2) It should be Avyabhicharini also. (3) It should be Sadat (continuous). (4) The aspirant should have complete Sadachara (right conduct). (5) The aspirant should be very serious and must in right earnest do the practices. Then realisation comes quickly.

Without chart or compass it is very difficult to run a ship in the ocean. Even so, it is very difficult to have a safe voyage in this ocean of Samsara without a disciplined or well-regulated life, without right conduct and devotion to the Lord.

Language of love is the language of tears. Bathe the Lotus Feet of the Lord constantly with your tears of repentance, Viraha and Prem in the temple of your heart. You will meet now your Beloved. You will enjoy now the bliss of communion with the Lord.

Even for a quarter of a second, the time taken for the eye-lids to close and open, if your mind does not run away from the lotus-feet of the Lord, i.e., if your devotion is like Taila-dhara (flow of oil) at all times, you will have the whole wealth of the three worlds at your disposal. The Lord gives a promise to this effect definitely. He will follow such a devotee wherever he goes. He wears the dust of his feet as His Tilak on His forehead.

Sudama came to see Lord Krishna, his friend. Lord Krishna was talking to Radha. As Sudama was clad in rags, he was hesitating to enter the palace. The guard informed Lord Krishna: "O Lord, a poor Brahmin named Sudama who is clothed in rags is awaiting at the gate of the palace." Sri Krishna did not allow the guard to talk a word more. The word Sudama was enough. He ran out of the room barefooted crying: "O My dear Sudama, my sweet friend." Radha was a bit annoyed, because Sri Krishna left the room abruptly without telling her a word even. Krishna came inside the palace in a few minutes with Sudama. He noticed that Radha was in a sorrowful mood. He knew the cause. He said to her "Dear Radha, forgive me." I am the slave of my devotees. I love them more than my very self." Lord Krishna seated Sudama in his own seat and snatched the parcel of baked rice from Sudama, as he was feeling shy to give this poor present. Lord Krishna put into his mouth the baked rice and said in rapturous ecstasy: "O Radha, never never before did I taste such a palatable thing."

When you have made a strong resolve to do Japa or meditation for one or two hours, you must do it slowly with devotion. You must not hurry up quickly with an agitated mind thinking of some other work, just as the contractor of a building hurries up his work with bad materials and deceives the landlord. You cannot deceive God. You will deceive yourself. You must not hurry up quickly with an agitated mind thinking of some other work, just as the contractor of a building hurries up his work with bad materials and deceives the landlord. You cannot deceive God. You will deceive yourself. You will not get the full benefit of Japa and Dhyana.

Constancy in worship of God is called Nishtha. The devotee gets himself well-established in his devotion to the Lord. The devotee gets Asakti or attachment to the Lord when he progresses in his devotion and consequent depth of meditation.

Sing the names of the Lord. Sing His qualities. Remember Him. Meditate on His qualities. This is the essence of Bhakti Yoga.

When you have perfect devotion and love towards God (Poorna Prem), the whole world will be under your control.

2. DIFFERENT KINDS OF BHAKTI

If the devotee loves God for some time and loves his wife, son, money, house, cattle and property also, it is Vyabhicharini Bhakti. The love is divided. A portion of the mind is given to God. The remaining portion is given to family and possessions.

What is Avyabhicharini Bhakti? It is undivided love. The devotee loves God and God alone. His mind is ever fixed at the lotus-feet of the Lord alone. The whole mind, heart and soul are given to God. This is Avyabhicharini Bhakti.

If you entertain devotion for getting wealth, son or removal of disease, it is Sakamya Bhakti or Hetuka Bhakti or Gauna Bhakti (Secondary devotion).

If you do not want anything from God save his devotion or Prem, it is Nishkamya Bhakti or Ahetuka Bhakti or Ragatmika Bhakti or Mukhya Bhakti (primary devotion).

When a devotee has devotion for Lord Hari, Lord Siva, Devi, Rama, Krishna and thinks that Lord Hari is Siva, Rama, Devi or Krishna, this is Samarasa Bhakti. He has equal vision. This is also the advanced stage of devotion. He makes no difference between Ram and Krishna, between Siva and Hari, between Krishna and Devi. He knows and feels that Radha, Sita and Durga are inseparable Shaktis of Lord Krishna, Ram and Siva.

When your wife is young and beautiful, you admire her curly hair, rosy cheeks, fine nose, shining skin and silvery teeth. When she loses her beauty on account of some chronic incurable malady, you are not attracted towards her. You marry a second wife. If you had loved your wife with Atma Bhav, if you had a comprehensive understanding that the

Self in you and your wife is the same, your love for her would have been pure, unselfish, lasting, undecaying and unchanging. Just as you love old sugar-candy more and more, so also you would love your wife more and more even when she becomes old, as you have Atma Bhav through Jnana. Jnana will only intensify Prem and make it pure.

The aspirant who worships the idol in the beginning beholds the Lord everywhere and develops Para Bhakti. From Vidhi Bhakti, he passes on to Ragatmika Bhakti or Prem Bhakti. He beholds the whole world as the Lord. The ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, rogue, etc., vanish. He sees the Lord in a rogue, ant, dog, tree, dacoit, cobra, scorpion, log of wood, block of stone, sun, moon, stars, fire, water, earth, etc. His vision or experience baffles description. Glory to such exalted Bhaktas who are veritable Gods on this earth, who live to lift others from the quagmire of Samsara and save them from the clutches of death !

What is Bhagawat Dharma? That which takes you to the Lord, that which enables you to kill your Vasanas, egoism, likes and dislikes is Bhagawat Dharma. That which frees you from the round of births and deaths, that which makes you fearless, desireless and 'I'less, is Bhagawat Dharma. That which fills your heart with devotion to Lord Krishna, that which enables you to behold the one supreme Tattwa, Lord Krishna everywhere is Bhagawat Dharma.

He who sees Narayan only everywhere, who has reduced all things to one, who sees all things in Narayan, who feels His presence everywhere, who has the feeling of oneness, who has melted all differences by looking into the unity at the back of all differences has surely attained perfection. He enjoys perfect peace and bliss. He is a perfect Siddha. He is a perfect Jivanmukta.

The trees, flowers, fire, earth, water, sky, sun, moon, stars, animals, birds, mountains, rivers, oceans, human beings constitute the body of the Lord. You should bow to them all without distinction. You should regard them as God Himself. Then only you will have equal-vision and cosmic love. Then only you can find peace. Then only you will find heaven on earth. Sri Tulsidas says: "Sri Sitaram is everywhere. The world is full of Sitaram. Therefore bow with folded hands each and every object." This is worship of Virat.

Prahlad meditated on his own Self as Lord Hari. This is Abheda Bhakti. This is the advanced stage of devotion.

3. BHAV IN BHAKTI

In Bhakti Yoga, there are five kinds of Bhav (mental attitudes) viz., Santa Bhav, Madhura Bhav, Vatsalya Bhav, Dasya Bhav and Sakhya Bhav. Madhura Bhav is also known as Kanta Bhav, Sakhya Bhav comes under the category of Madhura Bhav. Select any Bhav that suits your temperament and develop Bhakti to a maximum degree.

Sannyasi Bhaktas have Santa Bhav. A Bhakta of Santa Bhav type is not emotional. He does not exhibit much emotions. He cannot dance and weep and yet his heart is full of intense devotion. Sri Aurobindo Maharaj prefers this type and considers dancing and weeping as a kind of weakness.

In Madhura Bhav, the Bhakta entertains the idea of the lover and the beloved. He regards himself as the wife of Rama or Krishna. The Mohammedan sufis also entertain this kind of mental attitude. In Brindaban, Mathura and Nadiad, you will find a large number of Bhaktas with Madhura Bhav. They dress themselves like ladies and behave and speak exactly like ladies also. They dance a lot till they get Murchha Avastha (Swoon) and fall down in great exhaustion.

In Sakhi Bhav, the devotee thinks that he is the Sakhi (fellowmate) of Sita or Radha.

In Vatsâlya Bhav, the devotee takes Lord Krishna as his son, a boy of ten years. The attractive features of this Bhav is that the devotee gets rid of all fears as he is the father of Krishna and destroys all kinds of selfish motives as he cannot expect anything from his small son. The followers of Vallabhacharya entertain Vatsalya Bhav.

In Dasya Bhav, the devotee thinks that he is the servant and Lord Krishna or Rama is his master. Sri Hanuman had this Bhav. In Ayodhya the vast majority of persons have this Bhav. They have their names as Ram Das, Sitaram Das, etc.

In Sakhya Bhav, the devotee takes Lord Krishna as his friend. This Bhav demands purity, boldness, understanding and courage. Ordinary people will find it difficult to have this Bhav. But when Bhakti develops and matures, the Bhav comes by itself. Arjuna had this Bhav. There is equality in this Bhav between the worshipper and the worshipped. Sakhya Bhav is a mild type of Vedantic meditation. It will culminate in identity. Then the devotee says: "Gopaloham—I am Gopala".

4. PARA BHAKTI

You can have Darshan of Lord Siva in this very life. Many have realised. You can also realise. What another has achieved can be achieved by you also. There is no doubt of this. Ask not for any boon from Him. Whenever there is asking for boon there is no real devotion. It becomes mercenary. It becomes shop-keeping or business. You should not trade with God. Love Him for love's sake. Have absolute Nishkamya, Ananya Bhakti. Don't ask for Mukti even. Mukti is maid-servant of Queen-devotion. It comes by itself.

Mere Darshan alone of the tutelary deity will not suffice. Knowledge of the Self is also necessary. Nam Dev had Darshan of Lord Krishna several times and yet he was not a fully developed sage. Once Gora, a saintly potter tapped the head of Nam Dev in a gathering of devotees and pronounced that he was Kaccha or half-baked. Then Nam Dev approached a Vedantin, Vishoba Khesar in the temple of Mallikarjun for initiation into the mysteries of Kaivalya. Nam Dev found Vishoba Khesar in the temple in a strange posture. Khesar was in a meditative mood. He was lying down and stretching his feet on the Siva Lingam. Nam Dev said: "O venerable Swamiji, why dost thou lie with thy feet on the Siva Lingam?" Khesar replied: "Please place my feet on that place where there is no Siva Lingam." Nam Dev tried to keep the feet in several places but he found a Siva Lingam wherever he took the feet. Nam Dev was struck with wonder. He prostrated at the feet of Khesar and beseeched him to initiate him into the mysteries of Atma. Nam Dev returned to Pandharpur with knowledge of the Self. Now only he became Pukka or fully-baked, i.e., attained perfection or highest knowledge.

God, the individual soul, and world are really a unity. Their seeming separateness is but an illusion. Melt all illusory differences. Remove all barriers that separate man from man. Realise the underlying unity and be free.

Prahlad prays to Lord Hari from the bottom of his heart: "O Lord, In whatever birth I may pass, let me have unswerving devotion to Thy lotus feet." The world needs to-day such devotees to disseminate Bhakti throughout the length and breadth of the land.

When the heart is purified, the mind is naturally turned towards God. The aspirant is attracted towards God. Eventually he is absorbed in the Lord, through pure love, self-surrender and worship. The Bhakta now becomes a cosmic entity. He has cosmic life. He has one continuous life. The individuality becomes a cosmic entity.

What is Jnana? To see threads in cloth, clay in pots and jars, gold in ornaments, iron in various kinds of implements, wood in chairs, benches and doors is Jnana. To see God or Atman in every living being and to feel that God is seated in your heart and in the hearts of all is Jnana. (Vasudevah Sarvam Iti). Bhakti, when it gets ripe, brings Jnana. When Bhakti gets matured, Jnana dawns by itself. The fruit of Ananya Bhakti is Jnana.

Upasana is of two kinds viz., Prateekopasana and Ahamgrahopasana. In the first kind, Prateek or symbol is used for meditation. In the second kind, Prateek or symbol is used for his very self as the object of meditation. The previous one is the Bhakta's method. The latter one belongs to the non-dual Vedantins. One who has outgrown the first kind of Upasana is recommended to take up the higher Ahamgrahaupasana wherein he meditates on his own Atma as his own pure Self.

Jnana is the fruit of Bhakti. Bhakti destroys hatred, jealousy, lust, anger and greed, fills the heart with divine love and removes all barriers that separate man from man. When this is done the aspirant beholds oneness everywhere, realises unity of the Self, and experiences the cosmic vision which is beyond description.

Devotion to Atma is Bhakti, according to Advaita Vedanta. This is the highest Bhakti. This includes Prem Bhakti, Para Bhakti, Apara Bhakti. An Adwaita Vedantin is a worshipper of Lord Siva, Hari, Rama, Krishna, Durga, Gayatri, Allah, Jehovah, etc. He is not a sectarian Bhakta. His heart is expanded *ad infinitum*.

Devotion to Atma is the highest form of Bhakti. This is known as "Paramarthika Bhakti". The Jnana Yogic student worships his own Self as Atman: "I am Sat-chit-ananda Akhanda Paripoorna Brahman". Is there any devotion greater than this?

Prahlad, the noble son of Hiranyakasipu meditated through his pure mind and enjoyed bliss in the supreme differenceless Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He seated himself statue-like in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for 5000 years.

Feel His Presence everywhere. Strive ceaselessly to fix your mind in the Lord. Try constantly to behold your Beloved in all these forms. Silently repeat His Names. Sometimes sing His Names. Silently do Kirtan. Melt the mind in Him. Rejoice in silence in Him.

Feel all along that the body is a moving temple of God, your office or business house a big temple or Brindaban, and every activity such as walking, eating, breathing, seeing, hearing, reading, etc., are offerings unto the Lord. Work is worship. Work is meditation, when done in the right spirit. Work for work's sake, without any motive, without the idea of agency (I am the doer, I am the enjoyer), and without expectation of fruits. Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of God and that He works through your organs. Feel also that this world is a manifestation of the Lord or Viswa Brindaban and your children, wife, father, mother and other relations are the images or children of the Lord. See God in every face and in every object. If you develop this changed angle of vision and divine Bhav by protracted and constant practice, all actions will become Pooja or worship of the Lord. This is quite sufficient. You will have God-realisation soon. This is dynamic Yoga. This is an easy Sadhana. Hereafter don't bring your old lame excuses: "Swamiji, I have no time to do spiritual practices." Even if you practise this dynamic Yoga for three months, you will become an entirely changed being altogether. Realise right now your identity and intimate relationship with all beings, with ants and dogs, elephants and tigers, Muslims and Hindus, Jews and Christians. There is only a degree of difference in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman. When you look at a tree or a shrub, a Sikh or a Muslim, endeavour to behold behind the veil of form the real hidden Consciousness. If you do this for some time, you will feel inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop Cosmic Love or unity of consciousness. This will be a magnanimous experience.

Kabir says: "What is the use of ablutions and cleaning of teeth? And what avail prostrations at the mosque? With deceit in heart are offered prayers. What then avails a journey to Mecca? Hindus fast on 24 Ekadasi days. The Muslims fast on 30 days. But pray, enlighten me, who passed over eleven months and made only one month His own? Hari is made to dwell in the East, Allah in the West. But seek Him in your heart. You will find Him there both Karim and Rama. If God is only in the mosque, to whom does the country outside belong? Rama is supposed to be in pilgrim places and in His images. But they have found Him in neither yet. Who said that the Vedas and the Koran are false? They are so to those who do not think. Within all bodies there is but one and no second. Man or woman, they are but Thy form. Kabir is but a child of Allah, Rama and he is His Guru and Pir alike."

Pure love only can remove all barriers that separate man from man. Pure love only can eradicate all sorts of unreasonable dislikes and prejudices, intolerance, hatred, etc. Pure love only can unite a jew and a Christian, a Hindu and a Muslim, a catholic and a protestant, a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin, a Vaishnavite and a Saivite, a Samajist and a Sanatanist, a Ramanandi and a Shakta, a German and an Englishman, a Sannyasi and Vairagi, a Chinaman and a Japanese on a common platform and in the core of hearts also.

The aspirant gradually begins to feel that the Lord he worships is in the idol, in the hearts of all creatures, and in all the names and forms of this universe. He begins to feel His Presence everywhere.

He who sees the Lord in the idol only is a Bhakta of an inferior type. He who beholds the Lord in the Bhaktas only and at the same time who has the notion 'He is a bad man' is not a devotee', is a Bhakta of the middling type. He who sees the Lord only everywhere, who sees the whole world as

Lord Krishna (Vasudevah Sarvam iti) is a Bhakta of the first class type.

Just as sugar pervades the sweet-meat, so also God pervades the whole world. The whole world is contained in the Lord. The first Mantra of Isavasya Upanishad is: "Isavasyam idam Sarvam—This world is indwelt by the Lord."

Negate the Drishya (names and forms) and behold in its place Lord Hari everywhere. Forget the body. Forget the environments. Live in the one Consciousness of Lord Hari alone. This is Baddha-Samadhi.

The Lord abides in every creature. Behold the Lord in all objects, in all manifestations. He is in the breath; in the voice; in your eyes. He is the life of your life, soul of your soul. Make no distinction between a Hindu and a Mussalman, a Protestant and a Catholic, a Saivite and a Vaishnavite.

When you come across a beggar in rags, bow before him with folded hands. However distorted the image may be, it is the image of the Lord.

When Rama asked Hanuman as what he thought of him, Hanuman said: "When I think I am body, I am Thy servant, O Lord. When I feel, I am Jiva, I am your part, when I feel I am Atman, you and I are one."

The advanced Bhakta merges himself in his Beloved. He sinks his personality in his object of adoration and worship (his Ishtam). He plunges deep in the Divine Being. He dives deep into the ocean of Divine Bliss. He sees nothing around him but Him alone. The whole world appears to him as a manifestation of God. He talks to a tree, a flower, a dog: "O Krishna, O Lord, I see Thee in all these forms." The whole world is Brindaban for him (Viswa Brindaban).

Hari is in water, Hari is in the earth, Hari is in the air, Hari is in the fan, Hari is in the mind, Hari is in the walking stick, Hari is in the milk, the whole universe is full of Hari.

The fine cool breeze sings beautiful songs of true love to you but you too are deaf to hear them. Each little storm shouts Hari Hari to you but you are unable to hear.

A real devotee of Lord Krishna sees Krishna and Krishna alone in the whole world. He has a new Yogic eye, a new spiritual vision.

Turn your heart towards the lotus-feet of the Lord. The veil of ignorance will be drawn aside. You will behold a resplendent vision which no one can describe. O child of the Eternal, O Nectar's son, hear the eternal music of the Soul. Hear the voice from every object. The glittering stars, the blue sky, the effulgent sun, the murmuring brooks, the waves of the ocean, the smiling flowers, the snowy peaks of the Himalayas—all whisper to you: "God is here." Behold the divine radiance glowing amidst all objects of the world.

5. DEVELOP COSMIC LOVE

O man, where do you search for God? All these forms are manifestations of the Lord. See the Lord in these forms. If you serve all beings with Narayana Bhav, you really serve the Lord. Service of humanity is service of the Lord. Service of humanity is really worship of your tutelary Deity (Ishta Devata). If you cannot love and serve these manifestations of the Lord or visible gods, how will you be able to serve and love the unseen?

If you want to enjoy really the supreme bliss of the non-dual Self, if you want to become a real, practical Adwaita Vedantin or a sage, try to comfort the sorrowful, help the poor, heal or nurse the sick. Can any one who attempts to behold or realise the one Self hidden in all beings keep quiet without serving the humanity? All forms are the manifestations of the one Supreme Lord. All bodies belong to Him. When you shampoo the legs of a sick person, remember that you are shampooing the legs of the Lord, the legs of Virat or Saguna Brahman. Serve the animals also. Develop compassion and love for all creatures.

How can you worship God who is in all creatures unless you honour and respect everybody? Treat everybody with respect. View all with an equal eye. Do virtuous actions. Behold the Lord in all beings. Bow to all beings. Have intense and exclusive devotion for the Lord. Centre your thoughts exclusively on Him. Desire nothing, not even Moksha. You will soon overcome death and reach the fearless Abode of Eternal Bliss and Supreme Peace.

Brahman is like the sun, Ganges and the mango tree. Sun sheds its light on the wicked and the virtuous. A rogue and a saint can drink the water of the Ganges. The mango tree gives its fruits both for the care-taker and the man who cuts its branches. Develop equal-vision (Samadrishti) like the sun, the Ganges and the mango tree.

Though names and forms are different, the underlying substance or essence is one and the same. All these names and forms are hanging or floating in this essence. Hence we are all united at the common base. Universal brotherhood aims at the establishment of this unity only. It lifts the individual to a non-dual state and brings Adwaitic feelings (Brahmic consciousness).

Love and serve thy neighbour. Gladly and willingly give to others of what you most desire for yourself. This will develop cosmic love, unity, and equal-vision in you. You will soon attain Brahma Jnana (wisdom of the Self). You will soon see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self (Samyag Drishti).

Just as a mother who has lost her nine sons loves her only son immensely, so also you will have to develop boundless love for all beings. This is the highest qualification for an aspirant. The astral body of one who has this boundless love will shine with fine brilliant lustrous colour. There will be a glow of ineffable splendour.

Be kind to all. Love all. Never hurt the feelings of others. Be one with all. Destroy clannishness. Serve all. Respect all. Share with others whatever you possess (physical, mental and spiritual). Take the whole world as the form of Narayan. (*Aneka-rupa-rupaya vishnave prabhavishnave*). Bow before the world and everybody with folded hands. Give up the ideas of barber, washerman, cobbler, etc. Barber is Narayan. Cobbler is Narayan. Bow with folded hands before a scavenger and feel that you are actually bowing to Lord Narayan. Those who are shy can bow mentally. The former one is the best practice to develop equal-vision. By the former practice, you can experience the essence of Vedanta Jnana Samadarshitwa, the spirit of equality.

You may be prepared to give up your life for a good cause. You should be prepared to give up your life for the sake of your enemy even. Then only you can realise unity.

Even if a man hates you, you must love him. You must love all. You must love a thief, a drunkard, a rogue and a vagabond. Just as perfume emanates from jasamine, the sweet perfume of love should emanate from you and flow towards all in all directions. Then only is it termed universal love or cosmic love (Viswa Prem). Then only you have an expanded heart.

The Ganges gives you always cool, pure water. It does not expect anything from you in return. The sun sheds its light to all without anticipating any reward. Derive lessons from them. Always give, give. Ask nothing in return. Expect nothing in return. Do not expect even appreciation, approbation or recognition.

Vibrate joy all around. Radiate cheerfulness on all sides. Feel the unity or oneness with all. Love all. Give. Sing with the birds. Laugh with the Sun. Smile with the blue expansive sky, the visible representative of Akhanda Brahman. Chant OM with murmuring Ganges and the blowing breeze. Roar with the thunder. Dance with the trees. Breathe with the trees and flowers. Enjoy the Upanishadic beauty and feeling in the utterance "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*—All indeed is Brahman." Expand. Grow. Grow.

You cannot remove ignorance through Karma, because

Karma is not the opposite of ignorance or its enemy or antidote. It is knowledge alone that can dispel ignorance. Just as heat removes shivering from cold, so also the fire of knowledge destroys Ajnana. Therefore, exert to get knowledge of unity.

Brotherhood Bhav leads to the attainment of Vedantic Unity or oneness in the long run.

Every act of purification in any sect or community promotes the well-being of the whole, of which they form a part and therefore desires encouragement.

A Jnani is only an ideal Karma Yogi. A Jnani only can perform actions with a perfect Nishkamya spirit.

See how Raja Janak lived. He lived the life of a practical Vedantin while ruling the kingdom. You cannot conceive of any man busier than Raja Janak. He was ruling over millions of people and yet he was a sage, a deep thinker, a profound philosopher and a practical Vedantin. He had no attachment to his property or body or his family people. He shared what he had with others. He moved with all. He had equal-vision and a balanced mind. He led a very busy life amidst luxuries. He was not a bit affected by external influences. He always kept up a serene mind. He held discussions with various sages on transcendental matters. That is the reason why he still lives in our hearts. And why, even in this Kali Yuga, see how the veteran Nishkamya Karma Yogi and the seeker of Truth Mahatma Gandhi lives !

The sun, the flowers, the Ganges, the sandal, the fruit-bearing trees, the cows—all teach Vedanta only to the world. They live for serving humanity in a selfless spirit. The sun radiates its light alike over a cottage of a peasant and a palace of Maharaja. The flowers waft their fragrance to all without expecting anything. The cool, refreshing water of the Ganges is drunk by all. The sandal tree wafts its aroma even towards the man who cuts it with an axe. All fruit-bearing trees behave in the same manner. They please the gardener who nourishes them as well as the man who cuts them. The cows live to nourish the babies, the children, the invalids and the convalescents. Imagine for a moment when the world is devoid of cows for six months or the race of cows has become extinct. How miserable and weak you will become! The world will abound with anaemic patients. O selfish ignorant man, learn lessons from these practical Vedantins and become wise.

6. WHO IS A DEVOTEE ?

He who has no attachment for the objects of the world, who is free from egoism, lust, anger, who repeats the Name of the Lord, who serves the poor and the sick with Atma Bhav, who does Kirtan daily, who serves the Bhaktas with Narayana Bhav, who loves all, is a devotee of Lord Hari.

A true Bhakta or devotee cares not at all even for salvation or liberation. His heart is filled only with the true love of God. He spends his days and nights in incessant thought of the Lord. He never indulges in any thought of liberation or Mukti. He renounces Mukti even.

A devotee of Hari is always meek and humble. Name of God "Hari" is always on his lips. He sheds profuse tears when he is alone. He is very pious. He is very friendly to all. He has equal vision. He does good always. He never hurts the feelings of others. He has a spotless character. He never covets the property of others. He sees Hari in all beings.

Though there is heavy rain on all sides, the Chakori bird looks for water somewhere else. Even so, the Bhaktas look for their joy at the Lotus Feet of Lord Hari only, even though sensual objects go round them on all sides.

The language of the heart and soul is the same everywhere. Devotees of the whole world have one creed and one language to express their feelings and experiences.

Those who are endowed with Supreme devotion, who are stainless, who are beyond virtue and vice, who are perfectly calm and self-controlled, whose senses are under perfect subjugation, directly reach Lord Hari or Vasudeva without passing through the three stages; but those who are not equipped with perfect devotion pass through Aditya Mandala (sun's orb), Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sankarshana.

According to Bhagawata, there are three kinds of Bhaktas. "He who beholds his own beloved deity in every object and vice-versa and feels consequently a sense of fulness everywhere is a superior devotee. He who loves God and is friendly to his devotees, kindly to the ignorant and indifferent to his own enemies is a middling devotee. He who, from traditional faith, worships Hari in images, but has no respect for His devotees or others, is an inferior Bhakta."

The devotees of God all over the world have indeed an unseen eternal link that unites them in the great service of waking up humanity to the consciousness of the Divine. All Glory be unto the Lord. The language of these Bhaktas of different climes is one. It is the language of heart. In them all differences have melted.

Through devotion and communion with the Lord, the Bhakta obtains all those powers which come to men through birth or drugs or Tapas (austerities) or Mantras.

The glory of a Bhakta is ineffable. Even the Lord becomes a slave of His devotees. Victory to Lord Hari. Glory to His Name. Glory to the devotees who sing the glory of the Lord and the glory of His Name.

Chapter Six

HOW TO DEVELOP BHAKTI

1. HOW TO DEVELOP BHAKTI

The great Raja Rishi Khatwanga rendered great help to the Devas in battle. The Devas requested the Raja Rishi to ask a boon. Khatwanga desired the Devas to tell him how much time there was unexpired in his lease of life in this world for him to enjoy the boon so earned. The Devas replied, "There is only one Muhurta (a full hour)." Khatwanga said: "Let me attain the supreme bliss of Brahman within this Muhurta." The Devas replied: "Be it so." Khatwanga fixed his mind with intense concentration and devotion on the Lord during the Muhurta and attained the final emancipation." Friends, you can also attain the goal within one Muhurta if you fix your mind on the Lord with great concentration and intense devotion. What one has achieved, can be attained by others also. This is the immutable law of nature. Gird up your loins and fix the mind on the Lord and realise the eternal bliss of the infinite right now in this very second. There is nothing impossible for a man of strong will and fiery determination.

If you are a true seeker of God, you will meet Him within a moment. Remember Him always. Live by His Name. Sing His praises. Search Him in your heart of hearts. Learn the way from the devotees to love and serve God, the support of your soul, the only sovereign of the whole world, the indweller of your heart and the Inner Ruler.

Some say that Bhakti should be cultivated in old age when one retires from service. It is a serious mistake. Is there any guarantee for you to live to such an old age?

Even Sisupala, Kamsa, Ravana attained Siddhis though they were enemies of the Lord. Then what to speak of those to whom the Lord is dear? Through enmity and fear thei minds were filled with the Lord and so they attained liberation. Bear any feeling constantly towards the Lord, whethe it be a feeling of love, affection, devotion, fear or enmity you become full of Him. The mind gets saturated with Sattwa or purity.

You have eyes and yet you see not. When you look towards the sky, you fail to feel His Presence there. You have ears and yet you hear not Him. He whispers words of love and good cheer to you but your ears are unable to hear them. He keeps on intently gazing at you but your eyes are too blind to behold Him.

Even though you are a student of the path of Jnana, it is better to combine Bhakti so long as you have intense Deha Adhyasa (identification with the body.)

God is always with you. He will protect and deliver you. Take refuge in Him. His blessings will overflow into your life and transform your mind and body. Develop your consciousness of spiritual things. Make a special effort daily to exercise control over your thoughts, words and actions. Feel His Presence in your room. Pray and meditate daily.

Man cannot live on bread only, but he can live on the Name of the Lord. Real Swaraj consists in the attainment of God-consciousness through pure love and selfless service of humanity and country with Atma Bhav. Cultivation of pure, all-embracing love only can lead to the attainment of real Atma-Swarajya or freedom in the Self. It behoves, therefore, that every one of you should cultivate this pure love by eradicating selfishness, pride, egoism, greed, lust and hatred.

A devotee or Bhagawata has forbearance and compassion. He is friendly to all beings. He beholds his Lord or Bhagawan in all objects and everywhere. He talks to a block of stone, creepers, trees and pillars when he has Viraha or when he experiences the acute pangs of separation from his beloved even for a second. He has no enemies. He beholds his mother in all female forms. For him a mass of gold is a mere piece of stone. He is free from attachment, greed, anger, lust, egoism and mine-ness. He is innocent, simple, humble and dispassionate. He has firm and undivided devotion to the Lord. He gives up everything for the sake of the Lord. He lives to serve the Lord, the Bhagawatas and the suffering humanity. The name of the Lord is always on his lips. He always sings His glory.

A devotee should possess the following virtues, viz., faith, sincerity, humility and self-surrender, if he wants to realise God-consciousness.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the teacher after having taught the Vedas instructs the pupil thus: "Speak the truth. Do your duty. Do not neglect the study of the Vedas. Do not cut off the thread of off-spring after giving the preceptor his proper reward. Do not swerve from truth. Do not swerve from duty. Do not neglect your welfare. Do not neglect your prosperity. Do not neglect the learning and teachings of the Vedas."

If you abuse any man, if you hurt the feelings of any man, really you are abusing and hurting God only.

A devotee should become an embodiment of goodness. He must be ever ready to do good to living beings. Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "*Sarvabhuta hite ratah.*" Chap. XII-4. He who rejoices in the welfare of all gets Darshan of the Lord. He develops Adwaitic consciousness eventually.

Develop love in the garden of your heart by removing the weeds of hatred, suspicion, revenge, jealousy, pride, selfishness. The power of love is ineffable. Through love alone nations can be united. Through love alone hearts can be knit together. Through love alone Swaraj can be obtained. Therefore be rich in love and radiate love to all. Understand the true nature of love and religion, my child, and lead a true religious life of love and self-sacrifice.

Vihita Karmas are lawful actions prescribed by Shastras such as Agnihotra, Pancha Maha Yajnas, etc. Nishedha Karmas are prohibited actions such as: "Don't drink. Don't steal," etc.

If you have done an evil act or a sin, increase the Malas of Japa (fifty Malas more). Have complete fast (Nirahara Nirjal—without food and without water) on a Sunday. Repent with a contrite heart, with a firm resolve not to repeat it again. Feed the poor with your own hands on any Sunday. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." *Yajno danam tapaschaiva pavanani maneeshinam*—Sacrifice, gift and austerity are the purifiers of the intelligent. (Chap. XVIII-5 Gita).

If you want to develop Bhakti, you will have to weed out the thorns. There are some internal thorns such as lust, anger, jealousy, greed, hypocrisy, pride, cunningness, diplomacy, etc. There are some external thorns also, such as bad company, obscene novels, bad scenes, obscene songs, talkies, etc.

No development of Bhakti is possible without Sadachara (right conduct). Just as a disease is to be cured by medicine as well as dietetic adjustment, so also realisation of God can be had by devotion and Sadachara. Bhakti is medicine. Sadachara represents dietetic adjustment (Pathya).

The path of Moksha begins with purity and ends in knowledge. Universal love is the gate of Moksha. You will have to cultivate love gradually. Selfless service destroys impurities of the mind and helps in developing pure love.

Sri Ramanuja advocates that a devotee should practise the following eleven virtues if he wants to develop Bhakti. They are Viveka or discrimination; Vimoka or freedom from all else and intense yearning for God; Abhyasa or incessant thinking of God; Kriya or doing good to others; Kalyana or wishing well to all; Satyam or truthfulness; Arjavam or straightforwardness; Daya or mercy; Ahimsa or non-violence; Dana or charity; and Anavasada or cheerfulness and hope.

Mere right conduct itself is not sufficient to bring about salvation. It must be combined with Sraddha, Viswas and Bhakti. If the ground is well prepared through right conduct, the seed of Bhakti can be well sown in the hearts of those who are of right conduct.

Satsang, seclusion, Sattwic food are indispensable requisites for aspirants in the beginning. Old worldly Samskaras can hardly be changed without these three aids.

Vishnudas is an advanced saint. He lives in the forest 2 miles from Chitrakuta. He sleeps in a place which abounds with serpents. He has child-like simplicity. That is a marked feature of a Bhakta.

A blacksmith heats an iron rod, beats it on the anvil, bends it and does various manipulations to make it a perfect instrument for his various activities. Similarly God gives various trials and experiences to the Jivas to make their bodies and minds as perfect instruments for His Leela or play.

Kunti says: "O Lord Krishna, O Jagadguru, let calamities often befall us. Because on those occasions we could have your presence by which, we can attain immortality and Supreme Bliss."

Have a profound faith in the will of Providence. See the hand of God in weal and woe, happiness and misery, affluence and poverty, birth and death that you meet in your daily life. Work with heart within and God over-head. You will get success in life and God-realisation.

Nature always walks ahead. She arranges for your food and drink beforehand. She takes care of your body. Therefore do not bother about food and drink. Be at ease. Have faith in Mother and Her Grace.

Be cheerful. Be happy. Be fearless. Be simple. Be bold. Be pure. Be benevolent. The door of Moksha will be wide open for you now.

Jatividya mahatwancha rupa yauvanameva cha
Eetchi bhaktimargeshu janeshu pancha kantakah.

Know that caste, learning, position, beauty, youth are the five thorns in the path of Bhakti.

You have spent eight hours in sleep and the rest in idle gossiping, telling lies, deceiving others, in selfish activities, in gaining money. How can you expect spiritual good, how can you expect Immortality, if you do not spend even half an hour in the service of God, in singing His Name and in divine contemplation.

If you once ask pardon from God for a certain offence or mistake, you must not repeat the same offence again and again thinking that repetition of a few names of God will absolve you from sin. You must repent seriously with a contrite heart for the sins that you have committed You must make a very strong determination not to repeat the sin.

If you have sincere devotion to your Ishtam, if your mind is wholly attracted to His Lotus-Feet, you will reach the goal easily. All obstacles will be removed. All Sadhanas will be rendered easy.

See the Lord in everything. Lead an ideal life of perfect self-surrender and non-attachment. You will have Darshan of the Lord. All miseries will end. This is the central teaching of Ramayana and Bhagavata; put this into practice from this very second.

Sincerely pray to Lord Siva from the bottom of your heart (Antarika). Repeat: OM NAMASSIVAYA mentally for three hours in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. and three hours at night between 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with Bhav and single-minded devotion. When the mind begins to wander about wildly repeat the Mantra loudly for some time. Then take to mental Japa. You will have Darshan of Lord Siva. Forget the world, friends and relatives, and property. But forget not your Ishtam, Lord Siva. May God Siva bless you, my dear Banerjee. Say Jaya Siva, Jaya Siva. Repeat Siva Mahimna Stotra daily.

He who practises even a little of Yoga in the midst of bustle of a city is a greater hero than that Sannyasin who meditates on Atma in solitary cave of Himalayas where there is no temptation.

Sit not idly craving God's help, but be up and doing as God only helps those who help themselves. Do the best you can and leave the rest to God.

Gadhi a good Brahmin lived in the country of Kosala. He retired into forest and performed a Tapas for 8 months by standing neck-deep in water of a tank. Then he lived for a year with handful of water only as his daily food. Lord Hari appeared before him and said: "Now rise up from here and retire into the cave of this hill and peform Tapas for 10 years. Then will the eternal and true Jnana dawn in thee fully. He did the rare Tapas for ten years and attained Jnana in full.

Do you keep up burning the divine flame even amidst various activities by remembering His Name, feeling His presence everywhere and seeing Him in all faces?

Thoughts of God cannot enter the mind which is distracted by the worldly thoughts and desires.

Combine all the love you show to your wife, children, wealth and lands and then love God. You will realise God in a minute.

God is the wire-puller (Sutradhara) standing behind the machine of this world. He is the indweller of your heart. He presides over all actions (Karmadhyaksha). He is the Dispenser of the fruits of your actions. Live in God by singing His Name, repeating His Mantra, and surrendering the fruits of your actions unto Him.

You must possess intense and unswerving faith in the teachings of your Guru and Shastras, burning and lasting Vairagya, burning yearning for liberation, adamantine will, fiery resolve, assinine patience, iron determination, leech-like tenacity, child-like simplicity, clock-like regularity. Then only you will succeed in attaining the goal of life, i.e., Moksha.

You cannot cross this ocean of Samsara without the Grace of the Lord. Therefore obtain His Grace by doing Japa, Kirtan, Upasana and self-surrender.

How can you obtain His Grace if you have no Namrata (humility) and if you have not made ungrudging, unreserved, unconditional self-surrender to the Lord?

Sing the glories of the Lord with unshaken mind. Roll the beads with single-minded devotion. Repeat His Name with unswerving faith. Listen to Ramayana and Bhagavata Kathas with rapt attention. Visit holy places like Nasik, Benares, Hardwar, Rishikesh, Prayag, etc. Hunt for the Sadhus. Make an earnest search with faith. Do not be satisfied with a little sight-seeing only. Get some spiritual instructions from them and put them into daily practice. Develop right conduct. Then you can cross the ocean of Samsara easily.

To begin with, drink the Prem mixture twice daily at 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. Mix a tea-spoonful of Sraddha with 3 tea-spoonsful of Prem and half a tea-spoonful of Bhav. Add to this mixture 2 tea-spoonsful of Hari Kirtan and one ounce of Japa. Gradually increase the quantities in the mixture. This will form an infallible specific or panacea for attaining Immortality and destroying the disease of birth and death.

Practise Nama Smaran, remembrance of Lord's Name and a little Kirtan at night and morning. This will do for your spiritual practice. Get up at 4 a.m. Cultivate this habit, if you have already not got this. Study Gita, a few Slokas daily.

Even on tour, you must do Japa and reading of Gita. Do you not eat and drink on your tour? Don't become ungrateful to the Inner Ruler (Antaryami), who gives your daily bread and looks after you in every way.

Do Nama Japa for some time. Then meditate on the form for some time. Then meditate on the attributes of the Lord for some time. You can expand your idea on each attribute as much as you can.

Let Sankirtan be your daily food. Let Ram Nam be your solace, refuge and sheet-anchor. Let Satsang be your safe-boat to cross this ocean of Samsara.

If you remain in a sublime atmosphere with good spiritual vibrations under the guidance of your spiritual preceptor or any evolved soul for some time during your holidays, you will have quick spiritual progress. You will enter into deep meditation and Samadhi quickly. Meditation will become an easy process for you. You will attain a definite stage in the spiritual path. Afterwards you can continue your meditation independently at home.

The demon Mura oppressed the Devas. The Devas approached Lord Hari for protection. Lord Hari sent Yoga Maya to kill the demon. The Yoga Maya carried out the behests of the Lord and killed the demon. Then Lord Hari said to Yoga Maya, "O Yoga Maya, those who observe Ekadasi Vrata will be freed from sins. You will be called by the name Ekadasi."

The sweat that fell down from the forehead of Brahma assumed the form of a demon and said to the Lord: "O Lord give me an abode to dwell." Brahma said: "O Demon, dwell in the rice particles eaten by men on Ekadasi and become worms in their stomachs."

Withdraw the eleven senses, viz., the ten Indriyas and the mind from the external objects and fix the mind at the Lotus-Feet of Lord Hari. This is real Ekadasai day. If you fast on Ekadasi you can very easily fix the mind on the Lord.

Shut out the doors of the senses. Still the thoughts, emotions and feelings. Sit motionless and calm in the early morning hours. Ignore the visions and coloured lights. Have a receptive attitude. Go alolne with God. Commune with Him. Enjoy the abiding peace in silence.

Study the whole of Ramayana 108 times with purity and concentration. This can be done within three years, if you can devote three hours to it daily. You can go through the book three time in a month. You will acquire Siddhis. You will have Darshan of Lord Rama.

Do severe Tapas and meditation and Japa on some day. Enter your meditation room at 4 a.m. Make it a Nirjal day. Don't take any food or drink. Go on meditating and repeating your Ishta Mantra or any Mantra. Open the door only next day at 8 a.m. You can fix this on Sunday. That will be convenient. Study your mental state and feelings. You will have extraordinary spiritual experiences. I assure you. Be intent in the spiritual practice. Be sincere.

Here is a Sadhana for 10 days. You can do this during X'mas holidays or Pooja Holidays or summer vacation. Shut yourself in an airy room. Do not talk to anybody. Do not see anybody. Do not hear anything. Get up at 4 a.m. Start the Japa of Maha Mantra or Gayatri, OM, or your Guru Mantra and finish it at sunset. Then take some milk and fruits, or Kheer. Take rest for one or two hours. But continue the Japa. Then again start the Japa. Retire to bed at 11 p.m. You can combine meditation along with Japa. Make all arrangements for bath, food, etc., inside the room. Have two rooms if you can, one for bath and one for meditation. Repeat this Japa four times in a year. This practice can be kept up for 30 or 40 days. You will have wonderful results and various experiences. You will enter into Samadhi. I assure you.

Here is a Sadhana for advanced students. It is highly useful for getting quick, solid progress in the spiritual path. Get up at 4 a.m. Take a bath or wash your face, hands and feet only. Start your Japa on any Asan you have mastered. Do not take any food or drink for 14 hours. Do not get up from the Asan. Do not change the Asan if you can manage easily. Finish the Japa at sunset. Take milk and fruits after sunset. Householders can practise this during holidays. Practise this once in a fortnight or once in a month or once weekly.

Serve the poor and the sick. Serve Mahatmas. Cultivate Bhakti. Have Satsang. Hunt for Sadhus and Sannyasins with fruits in hand. Do Japa. Repeat His Name, Rama, Rama, Rama. Sing OM. Feel His presence always, everywhere. Live in Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Enter into Silence. Jnana will come by itself.

O worldlings, it is not very difficult to have Darshan of God. It is not very difficult also to please Him. He is everywhere, within all. He is seated in your hearts. Think of Him always (Sakara, Saguna).

Remember the glorious Bhaktas and their lives like Prahlada, Narada, Parasara, Pundarika, Rukmangada, Arjuna, Vasishtha. You will draw inspiration. Your mind will be elevated. Your heart will be filled with devotion.

Bhaktas of Lord Krishna should do verbal, silent (where lips only move) and mental Japa of OM Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya daily. They should keep the image of Lord Krishna with flute in hand in their heart. This should form the background of thought. They should sing during walking, working: "Sri Krishna Govinda Hare Murare, He Natha Narayana Vasudeva." Whenever they get depressed, they should sing this Dhwani. They should study Bhagavata Then they will have quick Darshan and realisation. Bhaktas of Siva should repeat "OM Namah Sivaya" and study Siva Purana. They should sing: "Mahadeva Sambho Kashi Viswanatha Gange" or "OM Siva Sankara, Hara Hara Sankara, Jaya Jaya Sankara Namami Sankara" or "Sivaya Namah OM Sivaya Namah Sivaya Namah OM Namah Sivaya."

Serve the poor and the sick. Serve Mahatmas. Cultivate Bhakti. Have Satsang. Hunt for Sadhus and Sannyasins. Do Japa. Repeat His Name. Sing OM, feel His presence always. Rejoice in the light of truth, knowledge and bliss. Enter into Silence. Jnana will come by itself. A poor devotee of Hari gets all the wealth (Divine Aiswarya) of Hari by throwing off the paltry earthly possessions.

Pray fervently like Dhruva and Prahlada. Sing His Name like Radha. Weep in solitude like Mira. Do Kirtan like Lord Gauranga. Sing Bhajan like Ram Pershad of Bengal. Dance in divine ecstasy like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and have Bhava Samadhi. Repeat His Name like Valmiki, Tukaram, Ramdas.

Whenever you get holidays, run at once to Prayag, Rishikesh, Benares, Kankhal, Hardwar, Nasik, Bhadrachal, Ayodhya, Brindavan, Pandharpur or Navadweep. Do more Japa there with more concentration. Hunt for Sadhus and Mahatmas and pay them your respect with fruits in hand with Bhava and sincerity. Get their Upadesh and follow them strictly. Live with them for some days.

Service of Bhagavatas, repetition of God's Name, Satsang, singing His Name, study of Bhagavata or Ramayana, stay in Brindavan, Pandharpur, Chitrakuta, Ayodhya—these are the five means for developing Bhakti.

Where Satsang is not held, where Sadhus do not live, where Sankirtan is not conducted, where worship of the Lord is not done, such a place is unfit for residence though it possesses a very charming scenery.

If real longing or thirsting for God dawns in the mind of a devotee, the first sign is that hunger and thirst will not trouble him. He will forget his food and drink. When the mother is busily engaged in the affairs of her daughter's marriage, she forgets her food and drink and yet she is very happy and strong. When a man attends a drama or a musical function, he is not troubled by hunger or thirst, because his mind is enjoying music and fine picture. When a man loses his son, he is not troubled by hunger or thirst. If the mind is disturbed much when there is a little delay in getting your food, or when you do not get the right kind of palatable food, or when there is not sufficient salt in the preparations, remember that you have no devotion for God. This is the right kind of test.

The aspirant has the same feeling, the same earnestness or seriousness for realising God as the fish has for getting back into the water, as the boy has for getting out of the water when drowned, and as the man whose house is on fire has for getting the fire-brigade; he will have realisation of God this very second. There is no doubt of this.

You have not made your offerings to the Lord with the same mental attitude which Bhilni Sabari had. You have not called the Lord with the same Bhav which Draupadi had when she called the Lord of Dwaraka or when Gajendra called Lord Hari. That is the reason why you are not able to meet your Beloved. Develop this Bhav. You will have the Darshan of the Lord immediately.

You will converse with the Lord in the beginning. You can see Him in the physical form. When your consciousness becomes cosmic, conversation will stop. You will enjoy the language of the silence or the language of the heart. From Vaikhari (vocal speech), you will pass on to Madhyama, Pasyanti and Para (subtle forms of sound) and eventually you will rest in soundless Omkara or soundless Brahman.

Na dhanam, na jnanam, na sundareem
Kavitam va jagadeesha kamaye
Mama janmani janmaneesware
Bhavatu tadbhaktir ahaitukee twayi.

"I crave not for money, nor for a beautiful woman nor for poetic genius. O Lord of the World, in every birth of mine, may Ahaitukee Bhakti (spontaneous devotion) grow in me towards thee, O Lord." Repeat this often.

The Lord does not want your external show. He wants your heart. Say once more: "Thy will be done. I am Thine. All is thine" from the bottom of your heart, Antarika. Be sincere. Weep for Him out of Prem (pure love). Cry in solitude out of devotion. Let the cloth be drenched in profuse tears.

If the love is of selfish nature, there are partiality and injustice. Selfish love is changing. It decays or diminishes. It is not permanent.

You can love God only if you destroy the false love towards wife, children and other objects.

If you have served God with a fraction of the zeal with which you serve mammon or your wife and children, you will certainly realise God within a very short period. Even one moment of intense love for God with burning Viraha, God-intoxication, and keen longing, will suffice to bring you face to face with God.

If you pour forth your love abundantly on God, your love of pleasure, wealth, beauty and power will vanish gradually. The only love that endures will be your love of God. Pure love destroys selfishness and attachment for one's own body. It infuses the spirit of self-sacrifice.

An aspirant writes to me: "Somebody tapped at my door at 3 a.m. I woke up and opened the door. I saw Lord Krishna with crown on His head. He disappeared soon. I went through the lane in search of Him. I was not able to find Him out. Then I came back to my house and sat in front of the door till day-break to see Him again." Cases of somnambulists or sleep-walkers are not uncommon. They dream even while standing and walking also. The above case might have been a pure case of somnambulism. You will have to be very careful in ascertaining the true nature of your spiritual experience, whether it is a dream or an actual reality. Darshan of Lord Krishna is not so very cheap. Aspirants very often make mistakes in the beginning.

If you are firm in your resolve to reach the highest goal of Yoga, if you have firm determination to attain the aim of spiritual life, you will rise up again and march forward even if you have a temporary fall. Feel the divine in you. Open yourself fully to the divine influence. Have perfect faith in the divine Grace at every step. Feel the divine guidance in all your actions. Aspire for the divine truth fervently. Develop burning desire for the attainment of God-consciousness and burning Vairag. Abandon all worldly ambitions and mundane desires. If this is done rightly, the divine light will descend. You will have rapid progress in Yoga. Feel the Divine Presence in your heart, in all faces, in all objects, in all sentiments and thoughts and in all movements. Go on with your practice assiduously. Do not become impatient if there is delay in the descent of divine Grace. Be contented in the Self. You are bound to succeed in the attainment of the highest aim of Yoga, viz., Immortality and eternal Bliss.

2. FAITH IN GOD

Reason is impotent. Faith is omnipotent. Weak reason is defeated by strong reason. A Bhakta with faith can enter the innermost chambers of the Lord as Sudama did.

Do you not take for granted many things in Geometry? The teacher says: "A line has length but no breadth. A point has position (space) but no magnitude." Is this really correct? Do you argue these points in any way? You simply take these for granted. Is this not blind faith? Then again, how do you know that this man is your father? Mother only knows your real father. She points out: "He is your father." You have accepted it. Is this not blind faith?

Though you are not able to see the sun on account of the clouds, yet the sun exists. Though you are not able to see the mind that is hidden in the brain, the electricity in the wires, the child in the womb, butter in the milk, fire in the wood, yet the mind, electricity, child, butter and fire respectively do exist. Even so, though you are not able to see God who lies concealed in these forms on account of the impurities in the mind, yet God does exist.

Although we cannot see the stars in the day-time, yet we know that there are stars. Even so, though we cannot see God with these physical eyes, we can infer that God is hidden behind these names and forms.

Sometime you are in a peculiar dilemma or pressing pecuniary difficulty. Help comes to you in a mysterious manner. You get the money just in time. Every one of you might have experienced this. You exclaim at that moment in joy: "God's ways are mysterious indeed. I have got now full faith in God. Upto this time I had no faith in God."

Brahman or the self or the Immanent God cannot be demonstrated as He is beyond the reach of senses and mind, but His existence can be inferred by certain empirical facts or common experiences in daily life. A certain lady had a fall from the third storey. Underneath there was a bed of sharp angular stones. She would have received serious injuries, but she was miraculously saved. She herself expressed: "I felt the warm embrace by some invisible hands. Some mysterious power saved me." Instances like this are not uncommon.

An advocate had no faith in God. He developed double pneumonia. His last breath stopped. His wife, son and relatives began to weep. But he had a mysterious experience. The messengers of Yama caught hold of him and brought him to the court of Lord Yama. Lord Yama said to his messengers: "this is not the man I wanted. You have brought a wrong person. Send him off." He began to breathe after one hour. He actually experienced that he left the body, went to the court of Yama and again re-entered his physical body. This astonishing experience changed his entire nature. He developed intense faith in God and became a religious man. He is still living in the United Provinces.

Another Advocate had a similar experience but there is some change in this case. He was also an atheist. He was brought by the messengers to the Durbar of Yama. This advocate asked Yama: "I have not finished my work in the physical plane. I have to do still some more useful work. Kindly spare my life now." His boon was granted. He was struck with wonder by this strange experience. His nature also was completely changed. He left the legal practice at once. He is devoting the remaining portion of his life in selfless service and meditation. He is still living in South India.

Damaset, father of Nam Dev, used every day to visit the temple of Vittoba at Pandarpur and worship Him with fruits or rice, etc. He went to a neighbouring village one day on some urgent business. Gona Bai, mother of Nam Dev gave the offerings to Nam Dev and asked him to go and offer them to Vittobha. Nam Dev took the articles of worship and placed them before the image of Vittal or Lord Krishna and requested Him to eat the same. When he found that the image was silent, he wept bitterly in acute agony. Then Vittal appeared in human form and actually ate the offering in order to please His child-devotee. Faith and devotion can work wonders. The Lord becomes a slave of devotees.

Feel the help from the inevitable hands of God during worldly activities. The Lord is always with you. He is watching all our activities and thoughts. Children fall from the upper stories. They are saved miraculously. In motor-car accidents and various other catastrophies people are saved in a mysterious manner, through the timely help from the inevitable hands of the hidden power (God). Every one of you might have had this kind of experience. When you are in great difficulty, He sends you money in a mysterious manner from some unexpected source. You feel His presence and His invisible hands. But you forget Him immediately when your pocket is full.

Do not argue. You will not gain anything. Sit before your spiritual preceptor or Mahatma quietly and meditate for one hour. Let the soul speak to the soul. All your doubts will be cleared by themselves. You will have good experiences. You will enjoy peculiar peace. There will be a holy thrill of joy in your heart. This is the way for your spiritual growth.

3. PRAYER

Prayer is the effort of man to commune with the Lord. It is a mighty spiritual force. It is as real as the force of gravity or attraction.

Prayer does not demand high intelligence or eloquence. God wants your heart when you pray. Even a few words from a humble, pure soul, though illiterate, will appeal to the Lord more than the eloquent, flowing words of an orator or a lecturer.

When you pray, you are in tune with the Infinite. You link yourself with the inexhaustible cosmic store-house of power (Hiranyagarbha) and thus draw power, energy, light and strength from Him.

Pray fervently to the Lord for the descent of the divine light. Crave for His mercy. Weep in His separation on account of Viraha. Yearn for communion with Him. Melt the mind in the Agni of divine love. Get yourself saturated with deep abiding peace. Burn the body in the fire of devotion. Now drink the honey of Prem. Get yourself intoxicated with the wine of divine love. Attain immortality and eternal bliss.

Attune your heart with the Lord by doing fervent and sincere prayer daily. Lay bare your heart to Him. Do not keep any secrets. Talk to Him like a child. Be humble and simple. Implore to Him with a contrite heart to forgive your sins. Beseech Him to bestow His Grace. Do not depend upon human help. Rely on God and God alone. You will get everything. You will get His Darshan or vision.

If you pray regularly, your life will be gradually changed and moulded. Prayer must become habitual. You will feel as if you cannot live without prayer, if prayer becomes a habit in you.

He who prays regularly has already started his spiritual journey towards the domain of everlasting peace and perennial joy.

When you pray, mentally visualise the form of the Lord, repeat His Name and Mantra and chant the Stotras or hymns. Repetition of Stotras or hymns will elevate your mind and inspire you. It will keep your mind in tune with the Lord. It will instil in your heart joy, peace and bliss. Sing the hymns daily and obtain the Grace of the Lord. Dwell in Him.

It was the prayer of Prahlada that rendered cool the boiling oil when it was poured on his head. It was the prayer of Mira that converted the bed of nails into a bed of roses, cobra into a flower garland.

Draupadi prayed fervently. Lord Krishna ran from Dwaraka to relieve her distress. Gajendra prayed ardently. Lord Hari marched with His discus to protect him.

Do not pray for the attainment of some selfish ends or mundane gifts. Pray for His mercy. Pray for light, purity and guidance.

The Grace of the Lord can be had through Ananya Bhakti and self-surrender. How kind and merciful the Lord is! Lord Krishna drove the chariot of Arjuna. He taught him the Gita. He protected Draupadi and Mira. He guided the blind Surdas. He saved Damaji by paying money to the Nawab. He honoured the Hundi of Narsi Mehta. Place your mind and heart at His Lotus-Feet. Sing His Glory Repeat His Name. He will do anything for you. Lord Krishna is the slave of His devotees.

Prayer elevates the mind. It fills the mind with purity. It is associated with the praise of God. It keeps the mind in tune with God. Prayer can reach a realm where reason does not dare to enter. Prayer can move mountains. It can work miracles. It frees the devotee from the fear of death. It brings him nearer to God and makes him feel the divine consciousness and his essential, immortal and blissful nature.

Prayer produces tremendous influence on the body and mind. It purifies the mind, invigorates and sharpens the intellect and generates beneficial and healthy spiritual currents in the body and mind. It develops the power of understanding. All incurable diseases are cured through sincere true prayer.

Prayer generates spiritual currents and produces tranquillity of mind. The power of prayer is indescribable. Its glory is ineffable. Sincere devotees only realise its usefulness and splendour. It should be done with reverence, faith and Nishkamya Bhav (without expectation of fruits) and with a heart wet with devotion. O ignorant man! do not argue about the efficacy of prayer. You will be deluded. There is no arguing in spiritual matters. Intellect is a finite and frail instrument. Do not trust this. Remove now the darkness of your ignorance through the divine light of prayer.

4. NAMASKAR

Namaskar means prostration. This is the easy way for Self-realisation. Lord Krishna said to Uddhava: "See me in everything." Prostrate before any body who comes in front of you, be it a man, ass or dog. You will have Self-realisation quickly, surely and easily. You will have to prostrate before an ass also, because the Lord is seated in the heart of an ass. Do it mentally before an ass if you are afraid of public scandal.

Lord Krishna says to Uddhava: "Giving no attention to people who laugh in ridicule, forgetting the body and insensible to shame, one should fall prostrate on the ground and bow to all beings down even to the dog, the Chandala, the cow and the ass." Doing prostrations to others makes a man humble. If he entertains Narayan Bhav also when he does prostrations, this will help him to realise that whatever he sees is God, that there is nothing but God, that the manifestation is the Virat aspect of Brahman. Doing prostrations to others with Narayana Bhav is a great help for developing devotion. Do mental prostration to a cow or an ass or a dog and feel that you are doing prostration to Lord Hari. All living creatures, all objects are forms of Hari only. Never forget this point.

There are six advantages in doing prostration. Don't do it like a drill. Do it gently with Bhav (feeling). Feel that you are prostrating actually before Lord Narayan or Siva. It must be a perfect Sashtanga Namaskar. The body with its six members, knees, forehead, shoulders, feet, chest, eyes, etc., should touch the ground. It removes egoism, infuses humility, produces Sama Drishti (equal vision). It fills the heart with Bhakti (devotion). It draws all the hearts (Atma Vasya). It eventually leads to God-realisation. You must touch the feet of those for whom you offer your prostration be he a Mohammedan, Christian, Chandala or Barber. This removes jealousy, Ghrina (contempt for untouchables), hatred, ideas of inferiority and superiority. Glory to such a man who does prostration to all. He becomes Narayana quickly.

If you prostrate before some one and at the same time if you think or speak of his defects, it is only pure hypocrisy. It is of no good. It is not a mark of showing respect to a greater man.

Do not do Namaskar like a drill. Do it gently with Bhav (feeling). Feel you are prostrating actually before Lord Narayan or Siva. You must do a perfect Sashtang Namaskar. Glory to such a man who does Namaskar with Bhav. He will become Narayan Himself.

5. IMPORTANCE OF SANKIRTAN

Brahma created various kinds of creatures such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants, etc. But he was not perfectly satisfied. Then He created man. This gave Him entire satisfaction. Because it is man only who can produce Sapta Swara (Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, sa). He can do Kirtan and realise God through Sankirtan. The animals produce only one kind of sound or Swara.

Mind enjoys the five Vishayas. The barrier that separates us from Paramatma or Supreme Soul is mind. These five elements, earth, water, fire, air and Akasa which go to constitute the body of the mind are the five dacoits who have plundered the jewel of Atma. Akasa is the ring leader. If you can control Akasa, if you can subdue the ring leader, the other four elements will come under your control. If you can control the five elements, you can control the mind very easily. The function of Akasa is sound. If you can sing Hari's Name in a sweet tone with rhythm and harmony, you can control Akasa Tattwa and thereby the other elements and the mind. That is the reason why Bhagawan says to Narada: "I dwell not in heaven nor in the heart's of Yogis; but I dwell there where my devotees sing My Name."

Just as curd, Pappad, pickles and Chutnies of ginger and coriander leaves and mint serve as very good appetisers and form a happy combination along with Kitchidi, so also Japa, Sat Sang, study of Ramayana and Bhagwata form a happy combination along with Sankirtan to develop your Bhakti more and more.

There is no softening age more powerful than Sankirtan Bhakti in melting the sin-hardened stony hearts of sceptical scoffers and unbelievers and all sorts of sinners.

The singing of His Name is the best means for dissolution of various sins, as fire is the best dissolver of metals (Vishnu Purana VI-Chap. 7-9).

Th son of a landlord in Meerut was seriously ailing. Doctors pronounced the case to be absolutely hopeless. Bhaktas took the case in their hands. They did continuous Kirtan day and night for seven days, around the bed of the patient. The patient stood up and began to sing God's Name on the seventh day. He recovered completely. Such is the miraculous power of Sankirtan.

Sankirtan is food for the mind and soul. Sankirtan is a divine tonic. Sankirtan is a potent healing balm for the shattered nerves. Sankirtan is a celestial nectar. Drink this nectar daily by doing Sankirtan in Brahma Muhurta and at night.

Tukaram was an agricultural peasant. He could not even sing his name. He was always doing Kirtan of Lord Krishna's Name: "Vitala Vitala" with cymbols in his hands. He had Darshan of Lord Krishna in physical form. His inner sight (Jnana Chakshu) Divya Drishti was opened by Sankirtan. His inspiring Abhangas are texts for M.A., students of the Bombay University. Wherefrom the unlettered illiterate Tuka derived his knowledge? He tapped the fountain of knowledge through Sankirtan. He penetrated into Divine Source through Bhav Samadhi that was brought about by deep Sankirtan. Does this not clearly prove that God exists, that the Swaroopa of God is knowledge and that Sankirtan has tremendous influence. Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa also could not sign even his name, but he was able to remove the doubts of erudite scholars. Wherefrom did he get this super-intuitional knowledge? He also tapped the Divine Source.

Trinadapi sunechena taroriva sahishnuna
Amanina manadena keertaneeya sada Hari.

He who is humbler than the blade of grass, who has the power of endurance like a tree, who cares not for honour and yet honours others, is fit for singing Hari's Name all the time.

Musical instruments can be used along with Nam Kirtan. Musical instruments are dangerous in the case of impure, passionate unregenerate persons when they do Lila as they will excite their passion.

The Mahamantra is too long to be repeated at a time without break. So it should be divided into two halves. The leader of the party will repeat "Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare", and the others will follow him repeating the same. Then the leader can repeat the other line: "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare" and others can follow this second line.

Manufacturing chemists pompously advertise in various magazines about their specialities and give free samples to create interest in the people. Even so Bhagawatas who have realised Bhagawan should preach about Nam Mahima (glory of the Name of God), should do Katha and Kirtan to create interest and devotion in the people. It is only when the soul of a man experiences faint glimpses of the divine through inspiration and grace of realised Bhaktas that his heart is burning with the all-consuming enthusiasm of devotion. Then he forgets and forsakes everything else and dedicates his whole life to the service of God and Bhaktas.

You must dedicate your whole life to the cause of Sankirṭan. Do not procreate many children. That is the key for success in life. Mysterious is the power of Maya. Mysterious is the power of Moha. But Maya and Moha can hardly approach the Sankirtanists!

6. CHARITY

It is a sin to hoard money. All wealth belongs to the Lord. He who lives as a Trustee only of his property and spends his money in charity thinks that the real property belongs to the Lord and lives happily. He attains Moksha or eternal peace.

The water of the Ganges cannot decrease if thirsty people drink it. So also your wealth cannot decrease if you do charity.

Lord Jesus said: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins", when it is done with the right mental attitude. Lord Krishna says: "Charity purifies the heart." (Gita Chap. XVIII-5)

A rich man who is deluded by his wealth cannot enter the kingdom of God. That is the reason why Lord Jesus said to the young ruler: "Go and sell what ye have and give to the poor if ye would follow Me". Hoarding money is a great sin. The whole wealth of this world belongs to the Lord. You should remain only as a trustee of your wealth and share what you have with others. Then only you will obtain the grace of the Lord and the peace of the Eternal.

Miserliness is a great curse. It is an enemy of oneness and a friend of selfishness. See the fun here. Madrasees take their food on plantain leaves. Some women are very miserly. They will open the bundle of leaves and take out the decaying ones for the day's use and keep the good ones for the next day. By the time they open the bundle the following day, those good ones also will be rotting. In this manner, they will be using daily rotten leaves only. They cannot enjoy fresh leaves on any day. Such is their miserliness. The same case with some misers who use torch-lights. Thy will not use the spare cells till the cell in the torch is completely exhausted. By the time, they use the spare battery, there will be complete leakage. They will be ever having dim light. Misers have no enjoyment herein and hereafter. They are watchmen only of their money. Many misers will not use new clothes. They will be wearing torn clothes. By the time they open the trunk, all the new clothes will be eaten up by moths.

Mr. Ramakrishna gave a blanket in charity to a poor man. He afterwards thought: "I ought not to have given him a blanket." His heart was in a state of agitation and agony. He wanted to get the blanket back from the poor man. If you do such a kind of charity, you will not derive any benefit. You will not get purity of heart. Many worldly-minded people perform charitable acts of this description only. This world abounds with such charitable persons.

All are very generous for themselves. Many will take first class milk or tea and offer second class milk to their friends and third class milk to strangers. They will eat first class fruits and offer rotten ones to strangers, neighbours and servants. How crooked are such people ! What a small, constricted heart they have! Their lot is indeed not only pitiable but also highly deplorable. O God, give them a large heart and right understanding. They do not know what they are exactly doing.

Always give the best things, best food, best fruits, best milk, best clothes to friends, neighbours, strangers, guests and servants. You will derive immense joy, strength and happiness. Put this into practice and realise the benefits yourself.

Do not have any secrets. Anything done in secret by shutting the door, without sharing the same with the people who are sitting outside in the verandah of your house, is sin. Give a little of what you are going to eat to other people first and then eat. This is divine nature.

Share with others whatever you possess either physical, mental or spiritual. This is real Yajna. You will expand. You will experience oneness and unity of life. This will lead to Adwaitic realisation.

Strip yourself of the veils or limitations. Then you will realise your oneness with the existence. Sadhana is needed. Practise them with zeal and sincerity.

Time is most precious. Utilise every moment profitably in remembrance and service of the Lord. Keep a few pies in your pocket always and distribute them in charity daily to poor people. Practise this at once.

People may say: "Pundit Rama Kanta Sharma has done a great virtuous action." On the contrary this may be displeasing to God.

It is easy to fight in the battle but it is difficult to give a gift silently without manifesting pride and self-glorification and without expressing to others.

Do charity to the poor but do not talk of your gifts. It will lead to self-glorification. "Whatever the right hand does,, the left hand must not know".

Some people do charity and are anxious to see their names published in the newspapers with their photos. This is a Tamasic form of charity. This is no charity at all. The lot of such persons is very pitiable indeed.

Lord Jesus says: "The left hand should not know what the right hand does." You should not advertise about your charity and charitable nature. There must not be any exaltation in your heart when people praise your charitable nature.

Look at the fun made by a retired householder. He offered a good, strong healthy body and mind in the service of his family and superiors in office for a period of forty years. When he was in advanced senility, when death was drawing nigh, he offered a rotten body and rotten mind in the service of the Lord. A highly generous present indeed! Here is a very liberal-hearted, munificent gentleman, a modern Karna!

"Yati" is controlled ascetic. He has subdued his passions, mind and Indriyas. A Sannyasin is generally called a Yati. The Lord of Yatis is called 'Yatindra'.

Entertainment and hospitality to guests is Atithi Yajna. A guest is Atithi Narayana. This is also termed Manushya Yajna. Performance of the five Yajnas produce Chitta Shuddhi (purity of heart).

The five great Yajnas as mentioned in the Shastras are:—

1. Devayajna which consists in offering oblations unto Devatas with recitation of Vedic Mantras.

2. The Rishi Yajna which consists in studying and teaching the Vedas with offering of oblations to Rishis.

3, The Pitri Yajna which consists of Tarpan (offering of oblation to departed manes and Shraddha, the offerings of Pindas, in the name of the departed souls.

4. The Bhuta Yajna or the offerings of food to cows, crows and animals, etc., which develops cosmic love and the Adwaitic feeling.

5. The Atithi Yajna: Giving food and due homage or honour to the guests.

Acording to the injunctions of the Hindu Shastras every householder must perform these five Yajnas. If he fails to do he suffers from Pratyavaya Dosha (the sin of omission). The fire-place, the water-pot, the cutting, the grinding and the sweeping apparatus are the five sources wherein injury to life is committed everyday.

These Yajnas are intended for the householders for the purification of the heart. The sins committed (are) to be washed away by the five Maha Yajnas or the great sacrifices which every Dwija or the twice born must perform and which are mainly intended to satisfy the Devatas, the Rishis, the Pitrus, the mankind and the Bhutas or the lower animals. This practice of the five great sacrifices thus covers the region of the whole universe and ultimately cannot but develop the feeling of "not-killing' or Ahimsa, non-violence.

Do Bhuta Yajna daily. Feed the cows, crows. Have Bhuta Daya (compassion towards animals), and expand your heart. You will feel oneness with all lives. You will develop equal vision which is the essence of Jnana.

If your hairs become grey, that is the first warrant from Lord Yama, the God of Death. You must make yourself ready to meet him. The wrinkles on the face, the bending of the body will remind you of the warrant. When the teeth fall to greet him. You will get three hiccoughs or final passing to greet him. You will get three hiccoughs or final pasing breaths lying on the bed. When the last hiccough comes, all your posessions will be taken away by your sons and partners. One will run after the Savings Bank Pass-book and another will take hold of the cash chest, another your Provident Fund papers and Insurance Claims' papers, another the ornaments that lie on your person and so on. Such is life on this earth plane. Friends, try to attain immortality through devotion, meditation, purity, service, Japa, prayer and enquiry. All troubles and miseries will come to an end.

In marriage ceremony you spend much money in feeding your relatives and friends only. You must feed the poor. You must feed Sadhus, Sannyasins and Brahmins also. If you feed a Jivanmukta or a good Sannyasin, you feed the whole world. You should set apart some money for helping the social and religious institutions. You should distribute religious and philosophical tracts, leaflets, Gita. Hari Sankirtan should be held in the morning and at night. Then only you will achieve great benefits and glory herein and hereafter. Always give a spiritual colouring to social functions and associate God with all activities, social functions and rejoicings. This is an easy method for remembering God and attaining God-realisation. Mere filling up the belly is epicurianism which makes one forget God.

You should be thirsting to do charitable acts daily. You should not lose any opportunity. You should create opportunities. There is no Yoga or Yajna greater than Sattwic charity of a spontaneous type. Karna, Raja Bhoja did countless charitable acts. So, they still live in our hearts.

In the beginning you can discriminate when you do charity. Later on when you are established in unity, you should do indiscriminate charity. You should have indiscriminate pity also. Few people can understand this point.

Charity must be spontaneous and unrestrained. Giving must become a strong habit. You must experience extreme joy in giving. You must not think: "I have done a very charitable act. I will enjoy happiness in heaven. I will be born as a rich man in the next birth. This charitable act will wash away my sin. There is no charitable man like me in my town or district. People know me that I am very charitable man." Bragging is mean and deplorable.

7. SATSANG

Real Satsang is keeping company with the Atma or the Lord through meditation. Association with sages and Mahatmas is also Satsang. Study of religious books written by illumined sages and saints is negative Satsang. Satsang is a safe boat to take you to the other shore of fearlessness and immortality.

Study of Gita is also negative Satsang when you cannot get positive Satsang of holy Mahatmas.

Abdhou vidhou vadhumukhe phaninam nivase ... ...
Swarge sudha vasati cheti budha vadanti
Kshara kshayah pathimritir visham Indranasah
Kanthe sudha vasati sa bhagavat jananam.

People say that there is nectar in the ocean, moon, heaven and the lips of a young lady. As moon decays in a fortnight, it cannot contain genuine nectar. There is no real nectar in heaven, because Devatas have to take birth again in this world, when the fruits of their virtuous deeds are exhausted. There cannot be also real nectar in the lips of ladies, because the husbands who drink the nectar from their lips die. The real nectar is in the neck and tongue of realised sages and saints, whose sweet words and instructions help persons to attain immortality and eternal peace.

How are Sadhus to be known? Lord Krishna has given a description of them. You will find it in Bhagawata: "Saints do not care for anything (Anapeksha). Their hearts are fixed on Me (Macchitta). They are very humble. They have equal-vision (Samadarshina). They have no attachment towards anybody or anything. They are without 'mineness' (Mamata). They have no egoism (Nirahamkara). They make no distinction between sorrow and happiness. They do not take anything from others (Aparigraha). They can bear heat, cold and pain. They have love for all living beings. They have no enemy. They are serene. They possess exemplary character."

The sandal-wood tree can hardly be found in every jungle. Pearls cannot be found in all seas. Precious stones cannot be found in all mountains. Real Sadhus or Sannyasins cannot be found everywhere. You will have to search for them in solitary places.

Satsang is an important sentinel in the domain of Moksha. If you keep friendship with him, you will attain the friendship of Vichar (enquiry), Santi (peace) and Santosh (contentment). If you take a bath in the cool and holy Ganges of the company of the sages, you are not in need of pilgrimage and sacrifice.

Satsang or company with Sadhus and Mahatmas destroys the impurities of worldliness and opens wide the door to Moksha. Satsang is a sentinel on the Kingdom of Moksha. If you keep friendship with Satsang, you can easily enter the realm of eternal Bliss.

A moment's companionship with saints and sages is of incalculable value. It gives all that is desirable and good. It overhauls worldly Samskaras and vicious thoughts and gives a new spiritual turn of mind to the worldly man.

Satsang or association with the sages removes the darkness of the heart. It is a safe boat to cross this ocean of Samsara. Satsang elevates the mind and fills it with Sattwa or purity. It eradicates the vicious thoughts and impressions and instils dispassion in the heart. It leads one to the right path and causes the sun of wisdom to shine upon one's mind.

Saint Bharata said to Raja Rahugana: "O Rahugana, unless you sprinkle yourself with the dust of the feet of Mahatmas and take to their company and shelter, you cannot attain Bhagawan, even if you perform Vedic sacrifices, Tapasya, charitable acts, study of the scriptures or even if you worship deities Varuna, Agni and the sun" (Bhagawata V-20-12).

Devotion to the Lord does not come by itself. One blind man cannot lead another. It is the company of Mahatmas alone that can generate devotion in the heart of a man. Glory to Mahatmas! May their blessings be upon you all!

8. SARANAGATI (SURRENDER)

Self-sacrifice and renunciation will lead you to nobler and higher spiritual pursuits and take you to the pinnacle of spiritual glory and fame.

The doctrine of Prapatti or absolute self-surrender to God is also spoken as Saranagati. God is the devotee's sole refuge and only saviour. Six items are recognised in Prapatti: (1) Acquisition of virtues which would make one a fit offering to God; (2) Avoidance of conduct not acceptable to God; (3) Faith that the Lord will protect him; (4) Appeal to the Lord for protection and mercy; (5) A feeling of one's own littleness; (6) Total surrender. The first five items are means to the attainment of absolute self-surrender.

Sadhan when done in the right spirit and with right Bhav cannot entertain the ego subtly. It is meant for the annihilation of Ahankara. Even in the path of devotion the aspirant has to do the self-surrender himself. God will not do this for you. The flute-bearer says: "Come unto Me for shelter with all thy being. Surrender yourself to me. Then alone you will obtain My Grace. Then alone I will liberate thee."

Every individual can work out his own salvation by dedicating himself to the Lord. The surrender must be sincere, complete and unreserved. This is the secret of success in the path of devotion. Personal contact with a developed saint till the aspirant is established in devotion is necessary. Then alone worldly nature can be changed and old vicious Samskaras can be overhauled thoroughly.

A mob of 10,000 persons came out to stone Mary Magdalene, the Roman prostitute. Lord Jesus addressed the mob with these words: "He that is not without a sin amongst you, let him cast a stone at her." The mob was silenced at the utterance of Lord Jesus. Mary Magdalene became next moment a saint through the grace of Lord Jesus. It is extremely difficult to say when, on whom and how the Grace of God will descend. Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "They who take refuge with Me, O Partha, though of the womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Sudras, they also tread the highest path." Dear friends, what reason, then, is there for despair? *Nil desperandum.* Be up and doing. Struggle. Exert Practise. Plod on. March courageously. Do sincere Sadhana. The all-merciful Lord will surely crown your efforts with success. Even the vilest of us can attain salvation. Lord Krishna has given us the word of assurance.

The Lord knows what is good for you infinitely better than you do. To resign absolutely to His will is even a higher form of worship than visiting his temples and shaking the bell, etc., and doing all sorts of ritualistic ceremonies.

He is standing with out-stretched hands in your heart to embrace you with His sweet love and mercy. Lift up your face. Approach Him with child-like simplicity, innocence and frankness (Arjava). Speak out your heart to Him. Do unconditional total self-surrender (Atma Samarpan) or Saranagati.

If you do willing, unconditioned, unreserved, absolute surrender, then all your duties and responsibilities are over. God will take care of you in all respects. You need not make any effort in Sadhana. God will do everything for you.

Unconditional surrender to His Grace in every act of your life seems to be the only hope. But when it comes to action

Anubhava, your egoism predominates. Self-assertion comes in. Try to overcome this.

Here are some Mantras or formulae for effecting ungrudging and total self-surrender. Repeat them mentally several times daily with Bhav: "O Lord, I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything." This practice will remove egoism and mineness and the idea of agency also.

The devotee says unto the Lord: "O Lord, I am thine. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything. Thou art just. I am an instrument in Thy hands. I am nothing. I can do nothing. I have nothing." and thus he destroys his egoism and does self-surrender unto the Lord.

The ten senses, the mind, the intellect and the Pranas have no independent existence. They have no power of their own. They derive their power and energy and light from the Lord. Therefore give up your vanity and egoism. Do not think: "I have done this great work. My intellect is very powerful. I am very intelligent. The Lord does everything. These are all His instruments. If you remember these points, you can free yourself from egoism and bonds of Karma. You can do perfect self-surrender.

Egoism develops through Karmas (I have done good works), Varna-Ashrama (I am a Brahmin. I am superior to everybody. I am Sannyasi. I am a pure man), possession of physical strength, wealth, intelligence, beauty moral virtues, etc. If this egoism is destroyed through spiritual Sadhana, true self-surrender to the Lord can be done.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. Self-assertion comes in. Try to overcome this.

Here are some Mantras or formulae for effacing egoism and total self-surrender. Repeat them mentally several times daily with Bhava: "O Lord, I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything." This practice will remove egoism and mineness and the idea of agency also.

The devotee says unto the Lord: "O Lord, I am Thine. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything. Thou art just. I am an instrument in Thy hands. I am nothing. I know nothing. I have nothing." and thus he destroys his egoism and does self-surrender unto the Lord.

The ten senses, the mind, the intellect and the Prana have no independent existence. They have no power of their own. They derive their power and energy and light from the Lord. Therefore give up your vanity and egoism. Do not think: "I have done this great work. My intellect is very powerful. I am very intelligent." The Lord does everything. These are all His instruments. If you remember these points, you can [illegible] them egoism and [illegible] of Karma. You [illegible] attain perfect self-surrender.

Egoism develops through Abhimana (I am [illegible]). Varna-Abhimana (I am a Brahmin. I am superior to [illegible]). I am learned. I am a pure man, [illegible] physical strength, wealth, intelligence, beauty, moral virtues, etc. If this egoism is destroyed through [illegible] Satsanga, true self-surrender to the Lord can be done.

Chapter Seven

JAPA YOGA

1. JAPA, THE EASY SADHANA

Name and Nami are inseparable. Remember His Name. Chant His Name. Sing His Name. Glory to His Name. Victory to His Name, which blesses us for ever and confers immortality, supreme peace and eternal bliss.

Constant repetition of the Names of the Lord (Japa, Smaran) is an easy means for crossing the ocean of mortal Samsara or earthly existence. This is more suitable for the householders.

Meditation is different from Japa. Japa is the repetition of any Mantra. When the mind is made to dwell on the form of your Ishta Devata as well as on the Divine attributes, such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, etc., it is called meditation.

You should cultivate Bhakti or devotion if you want to attain success in Mantra Yoga. Bhakti Yoga and Mantra Yoga are interblended. They are inseparable.

That man who does not repeat the Lord's Name lives in vain. It is better to die than to live without His Name.

He who does Japa of any Mantra must lead a virtuous life. Then he will realise the maximum benefits of the Mantra.

Japa and Dhyan are more important than Asan and Pranayam.

You should not doubt the teachings of the scriptures. Flickering faith will lead to downfall. A man of weak will, who has no faith in Japa, cannot expect to have progress in the spiritual path. If he says: "I am practising 'Who am I?' enquiry," this is all wild imagination. Few are fit for the 'Who am I?' enquiry.

Repeat any Mantra of a Devata you like best and feel its influence on the mind and the body and its revelations. This is better than mere study of books. Books, doubtless, will help you and throw much light. But what is wanted is real Sadhana or practice. Observance of Brahmacharya truthfulness, Ahimsa, right conduct, recourse to Sattwic diet are necessary during the practice. .

There is rhythm in the repetition of a Mantra. Rhythm is metre. Rhythm is flowing motion. Rhythm is harmony of pronunciation and proportion. Rhythm is recurrence of accents. This rhythm causes harmony in the practitioner. The hypnotic rhythm of Mantra repetition causes stillness in the mind.

If you feel very weak, you can stop the practice of Asans for some time. But Japa should be continued at all times. It is a mental and physical tonic, besides a purifier and giver of Moksha. Karmas have to be purged out. An eager aspirant gets all sorts of diseases, because he is hurrying up for union with the Lord. Many evil Karmas have to be exhausted or worked out. Aspirants should be absolutely fearless. Disease is a messenger from God. Disease is a guest of this house, body. Diseases are tests to try the sincerity of the aspirant. Seekers after Truth should have unshakable, unflinching, unswerving faith at all times, in all conditions of life. They should not be discouraged. Regular study of Ramayan, Japa with Dhyan, morning and evening walks, should be regularly practised.

Kamal got a severe scolding from his father Kabir for prescribing Ram Nam for a merchant, to be repeated twice for curing leprosy. Kamal asked the merchant to repeat Ram Nam twice and yet he was not cured of this disease.

Kamal reported to his father about the incident. Kabir was very much annoyed and told Kamal: "You have brought disgrace on my family by asking the merchant to repeat Ram Nam twice. Repetition of Ram Nam once is quite sufficient. Now ask the merchant to stand in the Ganges and repeat Ram Nam once from the bottom of the heart". Kamal followed the instructions of his father. The merchant repeated Ram Nam once only with Bhav from the bottom of his heart. He was completely cured of leprosy. Kabir sent Kamal to Tulsi Das. Tulsi Das wrote Ram Nam on a Tulsi leaf and sprinkled the juice over 500 lepers. All were cured. Kamal was quite astonished. Then Kabir sent Kamal to bring the corpse that was floating in the river. Sur Das repeated Ram Nam only once in one ear of the corpse, and it came back to life. Kamal's heart was filled with awe and wonder. Such is the power of God's Name. My dear friends, my educated college youths, my dear barristers, professors, doctors and judges! Repeat the name of the Lord with Bhav and Prem from the bottom of your heart and realise supreme bliss and immortality this very second.

2. MANTRAS FOR JAPA

In this iron age or the Kali Yuga, Name of the Lord is the support for a man to cross this ocean of Samsara. There is an indescribable power (Achintya Shakti) in the Name. This Shakti takes man to the Lord.

Of the various kinds of penances, in the form of action or austerity, the constant remembrance of Krishna is the best. (Vishnu Purana II-Chap. VI—verses 134-135).

Those who meditate on the form of Lord Krishna may repeat mentally the mantra: OM Namo Bhagawate Vasudevaya. Vasudeva is another name for Lord Krishna. It means: "All-pervading intelligence."

Bow down to Lord Narayana and utter the words 'Jaya Narayana'. Do mentally Japa of "Om Namo Narayanaya." Do eight lacs of Japa of this sacred Mantra. This will form one Purascharana. Then do Havan. Feed the Brahmins and the poor people. You will have wonderful spiritual experiences.

Japa of OM and Mahavakyas such as 'Aham Brahma Asmi' will strengthen Vedantic Samskaras, purify the Chitta and eventually lead to the attainment of knowledge of Self.

Every Mantra should be preceded by Pranava or OM. Omkar gives full lilfe to the Mantra.

All Mantras have equal potency or Power. It is quite incorrect if you say one Mantra is superior to another.. You can attain God-realisation by doing Japa of any Mantra. Valmiki attained God-consciousness by repeating even Mara-Mara. Some people think that OM or Soham is superior to Om Namassivaya or OM Namo Narayanaya. This is also wrong. The state gained by doing Japa of OM or Soham can be attained by doing Japa of Sri Ram or Radheshyam also.

Ram or OM is a veritable sword for destroying the Rakshas-mind.. It is a true boat to cross this vast ocean of Samsara. It is a strong weapon for conquering this world. It is a fire (Jnana-Agni or the fire of wisdom) to burn ignorance, this body, the Samskaras and the Vasanas. It is the incantation or Mantra for awakening the Soul. It is a magic balm to soothe the shattered nerves. It is the open sesame" to open the infinite realms of eternal Bliss and supreme peace. Hold this mysterious sword, break all links with the world and destroy the bonds of Karma and mind, annihilate ignorance, crush the tendencies and enter boldly the vast domain of illimitable joy and eternal sun-shine.

3. AJAPA JAPA

Do Ajapa Japa. The Prana will be absorbed in the Nada (Anahata sounds of the heart). All the Vrittis will perish.

If you are a very busy man and if you lead a travelling life always you need not have a special place and a special time for meditation. Do Soham Japa and Soham Dhyana along with the breath. This is very easy. Or associate RA—MA Mantra also with the breath. Then every movement of breath will become a prayer and meditation. Remember 'Soham.' Feel His Presence. everywhere. This will suffice

4. LIKHITA JAPA

Likhita Japa or Mantra-writing is a sharp goad to direct the mind towards God. Fix the mind on the Lord. Think of His attributes when you write the Mantra. Forget the environments. Forget everything. Remain alone with your Ishta Devata. Daily write the Mantra in a note-book with ink for at least half an hour, observing Mowna. You can write the Mantra in any language. Stick to one Mantra, your Guru Mantra or Mantra of your Ishta Devata.

On Sundays all the members of your family can sit together in the evening and write for one hour in a note-book any Mantra Hari OM or Sita Ram or Sri Ram Jaya Ram or OM Namah Sivaya or OM Namo Narayanaya, observing Mowna for one hour. You will feel wonderful peace and strength. Practise this even for a day. This is for the benefit of your family members. You can sit in a common place or a temple with some of your friends and can have this solid, dynamic spiritual practice. Keep up the internal Bhav when you write the Mantra.. Do not look hither and thither. You will have more concentration in this practice than in Japa. I have introduced this practice in Bihar, United Provinces and Punjab and various other places. Thousands have derived immense benefits. Even educated persons who were once atheists have taken to this practice. If you can do this practice daily, you will realise marvellous benefits indeed.

5. BENEFITS OF JAPA

Japa is a marvellous divine soap for the mind. Japa gives a nice refreshing, exhilarating spiritual bath. It wonderfully washes the subtle body or Linga Sareera or astral body. It cleanses it of its various kinds of impurities. Japa purifies the heart. Japa steadies the mind. It destroys the Shad Ripus. It destroys births and deaths. Japa burns the sins. Japa scorches the Samskaras. Japa annihilates atttachment and induces Vairagya. Japa roots out all desires and makes one fearless. Japa removes delusion and gives supreme peace. Japa develops Prem and unites the devotee with the Lord. Japa gives health, wealth, strength and long life. Japa brings God-consciousness. Japa awakens Kundalini and bestows eternal bliss.

Santosh (contentment), Shanti (peace of mind), balance of mind, inner spiritual strength, fearlessness, absence of irritability of mind are some of the signs of spiritual progress. These are the fruits of practice of Japa of any Mantra.

When Allopathy, Homeopathy, Chromopathy, Naturopathy, Ayurveda and other 'pathies' fail to cure a disease, the Divine Namapathy alone can save you. Name of the Lord is a sovereign specific, a sheet anchor, an infallible penacea and a cure-all for all disases. It is an ideal or supreme 'pick-me-up' in gloom and despair, in depression and sorrow, in the daily battle or the struggle for existence.

Name of the Lord is the seed of the tree of spirituality. It is the destroyer of the impurities of the mind. It bestows supreme peace, eternal Bliss and infinite Knowledge. It infuses divine love in the hearts of the reciters. It is the fountain-head of all happiness. May that Name, the giver of Immortality, remove all your fears and bring solace and supreme joy to all!

Name of Sri Rama is sweeter than the sweetest of objects. It is a haven of peace. It is the very life of pure souls. It is the purifier of all purifying agencies. It quenches the consuming fire of worldly desires. It awakens the knowledge of God which is dormant in our hearts. It bathes the aspirant in the ocean of divine bliss. Glory to Sri Rama and His Name!

The most heinous sins of men disappear immediately if they remember the Lord even for a moment. (Vishnu Purana VI, 8-10).

There is a mysterious power in the Name. There is an inscrutable Shakti in God's Name. All the divine potencies are hidden in Lord's Name. It is a cream or quintessence of Chyavanaprash, Makaradhwaja, almonds, Vasantakusumakara or Swarna Bhasma or gold oxide. It is a mysterious ineffable divine injection '1910194'.

There is no true happiness for him or her here and hereafter who has forgotten the Lord. There is no real peace for him who leads a selfish life and who separates himself from others on account of pride and egoism. Constant remembrance of the Lord will eradicate all miseries and sorrows and will confer immortality, bliss and peace on the devotee. Self-sacrifice will destroy selfishness and egoism. Self-sacrifice is the only shortest route to divine union.

The divine Name will eradicate the disease of birth and death and bestow on you Moksha, liberation or Immortality.

Name of the Lord is a potent unfailing antidote for those who are bitten by the serpent of Samsara. It is a nectar

(Amrita) that can confer Immortality and perennial peace. Yama is terribly afraid of those who repeat the Name of the Lord. He cannot approach them. Markandeya, son of Mrikandu, attained eternal life through repeating the Name of the Lord Siva. He realised the Supreme and fearless state.

A Bhakta repeats the Mantra of the Lord during Pooja, worship, and touches his heart, his head, tuft of hair, arms and hands. There is Chaitanya in every letter of the Mantra. Through repetition of the Mantra and touching the parts of the body with repetition of the parts of the Mantra, the aspirant is gradually divinised. There is spiritual awakening. Spiritual currents are generated. Tamas and Rajas are destroyed. He is filled with pure Sattwa. He becomes identical with the object of worship. He attains the same world of, or proximity with, or the same form of, or absorption into, the Lord..

6. CONSTANT JAPA WITH BHAVA NEEDED

Keep the spiritual ideal before you always and struggle hard to confront and overcome the difficulties one by one. Then only you will get spiritual strength (Atma Bala). Constant remembrance of the Lord and feeling His Presence will help you to realise the goal. When a mental habit of Nama Smaran and Japa is formed by practice for 3 or 4 months, the mind by itself will do the Smaran whenever it is released from office work. It will automatically move to the background of thought. This is your spiritual asset.

If you remember God at the time of death, you can certainly realise Him. Lord Krishna gives His word of assurance: "He who, casting off the body, goeth forth thinking upon Me only at the time of death, he entereth into My being; there is no doubt of that." (Gita Chap. VIII-5). But you can remember God at the time of death only if you have practised such remembrance throughout your life.

Form a strong habit of repeating the Name of the Lord. Then only it will be easy for you to remember Him at the moment of death also.

If you do Japa of a Mantra 13 crores of times, you will have Darshan of your Ishta Devata in physical form. If you are sincere and earnest, you can do this within 4 years.

In 14 hours, you can do 2000 Malas of Hari OM Japa. In 7 hours you can do Japa of one lakh of Sri Rama Mantra. In half an hour you can do 10,000 Sri Rama Japa.

Chitrakuta is a wonderful place for meditation. There is the river Mandakini with clear, sparkling water. Bhaktas of Sri Rama can have Darshan of Lord Rama in six months if they do Japa of Rama Nam in Chitrakuta in right earnest intently, living on a diet of milk and fruits. So says Sri Tulsi Dasji in his Chopai.

For some who practise Japa or recitation of Mantra daily the repetition becomes mechanical. They do not feel any bliss during the repetition. They will have to generate the Bhav and think of the meaning of the Mantra and attributes of the Lord. They should try to feel the Chaitanya and Shakti of the Mantra and His Presence in the heart and every atom of the body. Then they will feel a peculiar holy thrill in the heart, bliss and supreme peace which is beyond description.

It is not the number of Japa that should be taken into consideration. There must be purity, concentration and Bhav (feeling) while doing Japa. This is more important.

Do not bother about Matra, Para and Pasyanti. Do Japa of OM mentally regularly with meaning and Bhav. You will realise the spiritual benefits. Why do you waste your time in counting the pebbles on the bank? Take a dip immediately in the Ganges and enjoy the bath. Become wise.

Chapter Eight

KARMA YOGA

1. NECESSITY FOR KARMA YOGA

Rivers always give fresh, good, drinking water for all living beings. Trees give fruits and shade. Sun gives light, heat and energy. Earth brings forth all sorts of vegetables and grains. Flowers give beauty. Cows give nutritious milk. Except man, all objects do lot of self-sacrifice. Man only is extremely selfish.

Spiritual culture is a *sine qua non* and a great desideratum for national regeneration. The goal of life is Self-realisation. Spiritual culture alone can develop the will force (Atma Bala) and make people unselfish, fearless, courageous and strong, and remove Moha for the body. Those who are unselfish alone can really serve the country; can work in terms of unity and can have real cosmic love for all (Viswa Prem).

Everybody is generous to himself, to his wife and children. He ignores others. He vainly imagines that he is separate from others. This is Ignorance. This is Maya. This is the cause for birth and death and for human miseries and sufferings. Separation is death. Unity is eternal life.

Conquer the hearts of men through pure love. Adhere to Truth and march victoriously in the field of Yoga. Annihilate egoism and enter the infinite domain of supreme peace. Destroy ignorance and attain knowledge of the Self. Crush the Vasanas and enter the illimitable realm of Eternal Bliss

Selfishness is the source of all vices. It is born of ignorance. A selfish man is greedy and unrighteous. He is far from God. He will do anything to attain his ends. He injures others, robs their properties and does many sinful actions to satisfy his selfishness. He has neither scruples nor character.

Peace of mind is unknown to him. He is always planning and scheming for acquisition of wealth, power, name and fame. He always separates himself from others. He is very much attached to his wife, children and property. Attachment and sense of separateness are present in him to a maximum degree.. Selfishness is a great impediment to Yoga. Destroy selfishness through selfless service, charity, Satsang.

Through selfishness, you have become narrow-minded Your heart has become small and contracted. Through serving and helping others disinterestedly, your heart expands. You become one with God or Brahman. Therefore take delight in service.

Many people spend their lives on the banks of the Ganges for several years. They do Japa and Kirtan and study books on Vedanta. They repeat the formula: "Aham Brahmasmi" very often and yet they do not have any realisation. They are in the same state as they were some years ago, because they do not possess large heart (Chitta Visalata). They have no generous heart (Udara Vritti). Chitta Visalata is a fundamental virtue which the seeker after Truth should possess. Untiring selfless, charitable acts, service of the humanity, kind acts, spontaneous and unrestrained generosity will produce expansion of heart quickly. One Atman dwells in the hearts of all beings. How can you realise Him if you do not possess all-embracing love, if you do not share what you have with others?

Man is not only a citizen of this world but also of many worlds. He has to face dangers and temptations not only in this world but also in other worlds. The plane of the Gandharwas is full of temptations. That is the reason why it is said in Yoga Shastras that the aspirant should purify himself first, should control his senses, should eradicate his desires, should be established in Yama before he attempts to awaken his Kundalini, the sleeping potential Shakti that lies dormant in the basal Muladhara Chakra. If Kundalini is awakened before he attains purity by Asans, Bandhas, Mudras, and Pranayam, he will come accross the temptations of the other planes, he will have no strength of will to resist these temptations and will have a hopeless downfall. It will be very difficult for him to climb up again to the original height which he climbed in the ladder of Yoga. Therefore the aspirant should try to purify himself first. If perfect purity is attained through Japa, Kirtan and constant selfless service, Kundalini will awaken by itself and move towards the Sahasrara at the crown of the head to meet Her Lord Siva, the trident-bearer of Mount Kailas, the store-house of wisdom, bliss and peace.

Nishkamya Karma or the unselfish performance of the duties of life (Swadharma) is the first step towards the attainment of the final beatitude of life. The practice of Nishkamya Karma purifies the heart and destroys the sense of separateness. Then you will have to take to Upasana to steady the mind and obtain the grace of the Lord. Finally Vedanta will help you to destroy the veil of ignorance and attain Kaivalya Moksha or the final release from the round of births and deaths.

Develop eager enthusiasm for selfless disinterested service. Have a wide, generous, large-hearted tolerance. Be kind to all. Love all. Serve all. Serve the Lord in all.

Learn to give. There is immense joy in giving. Very few can understand this. Learn to resign to the will of God. There is indescribable peace in self-surrender. Very few can realise this. Learn to discriminate. There is ineffable bliss in discriminating between the real and the unreal. Very few can recognise this. Learn to be dispassionate. There is eternal satisfaction in cultivating Vairagya. Very few can know this.

Some are able to work, but they cannot meditate. Some can meditate but they cannot work. This is one-sided development. There must be a healthy combination of meditation and selfless work. This is the Yoga of Synthesis. This is dynamic Yoga. Then only you will not complain of Vikshepa or tossing of mind, when you move in the world or when you remain in seclusion. Then only you can keep up balance of mind. Then only you will have integral development.

Develop cosmic love (Viswa Prem). Identify yourself with the Viswa Atma (soul of the world, universal soul). Destroy selfishness and petty-mindedness. Expand. Expand. Awake. Arise Throw off your lethargy, indifference. Lead the life of oneness and unity. Manifest the hidden powers. Assert. Affirm. Realise the Self. A glorious future is awaiting you.

If you are attached to your wife and children, you cannot develop universal love. You cannot look upon all mankind as kith and kin. You cannot cultivate universal brotherhood. You cannot extend the same love which you have for your children to other children. You cannot consider all children as your own children. You will have a constricted or narrow heart. Your love will be confined to a few persons only. Through selfishness, you have created a boundary wall round the members of your small family only. You always think: "Let my family members duly prosper. Let us only be happy. Why should I bother about the welfare of others?"

Whereas the man who has developed universal love has equal vision for all. He loves and embraces all. All children are his. All men are his brothers. All women are his sisters. The whole world is his family. The whole world is his home. He sympathises with all. He serves all. He shares what he has with all. He cares for the well-being of all. He sacrifices his interests for the interest of others. He lives and dies for others. What a magnanimous personality. What an expanded heart he has. He is a veritable God on earth.

Vedanta without heart is quite dry. Bhakti without knowledge is blind and unsteady. Karma gives a finishing touch. You give expression to your inner feelings through Karma. Through unselfish service, you can develop pure Adwaitic feelings. How can a liberated soul, who sees the Self in all beings, desist from serving the world.

People who manifest definite deep and active sympathy towards sufferes are very rare. The world abounds with people who show some kind of lip-sympathy or vague shallow sympathy. The man of active and definite sympathy at once shares what he has with the afflicted person. He has a very soft heart. His heart melts the moment he sees a man in acute distress. He actually feels himself the pangs of the distressed person. He who shows lip-sympathy is a confirmed hypocrite. The man of indefinite or vague shallow sympathy feels a bit when he sees a man in a pitiable condition, but he is not willing to give him something from his purse. He keeps his fists closed. This man is better than the man who evinces lip-sympathy because he can be corrected and improved in course of time. The vague sympathy may assume the type of definite or positive sympathy when the man evolves through more experiences.

Selfless service of humanity prepares the aspirant for the attainment of cosmic consciousness or the life of oneness or unity with God.

One who has no purity of heart though versed in the Vedic lore or scriptural knowledge, cannot comprehend the Great One or the Supreme Soul who dwells in the chambers of the hearts of all beings, who is the support for the world, who is all-pervading and self-luminous.

What is the object in Seva or service? Why do you serve poor people and the suffering humanity at large? Why do you serve the society and the country? By doing service you purify your heart. Egoism, hatred, jealousy, idea of superiority vanish. Humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance and mercy are developed. Sense of separateness is annihilated. Selfishness is eradicated. You get a broad outlook of life. You begin to feel oneness or unity of life. You develop a broad heart with broad generous views. Eventually you get knowledge of the Self. You realise the 'One in all' and 'all in One'. You feel unbounded joy. Society is nothing but a collection of units or individuals. World is nothing but manifestation of God. Service of humanity is service of God only. Service is worship. One should work with this Bhav. Then he can have quick realisation and purification of heart.

Live within. Merge in the Soul. Know the Self. Become That. Be free. Move about happily. Nations can be united through love, knowledge of Self and deep understanding. Communities can be linked through spiritual culture or practice of Vedanta. Races can b joined through realisation of the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads. Different sects and cults can be united through expansion of heart and broad tolerance. Members of a family can be united through Prem, complacency and knowledge.

2. VARIETIES OF KARMA YOGA

Selfless service unto humanity with Atma Bhav through the medium of social and charitable institutions, feeding the poor, clothing the nude, sympathising with the needy, attendance on the sick, consoling the depressed, helping the fallen, imparting knowledge to the ignorance without expectation of fruits thereof, free tuition to the poor students without the least idea of agency, feeling that you work out His will in the grand plan and that you are an instrument in His hands (Nimitta Bhav)—all come under the category of Nishkamya Karma Yoga, the easiest means for the purification of the heart, which in turn is a pre-requisite for the reception of the highest truth.

A doctor can purify his heart quickly if he serves the poor people with the right mental attitude. Here is a great field for him for purifying the heart and attaining Self-realisation through purity. A doctor can realise God easily, if he develops the true Bhav of a Karma Yogin, the Bhav that he is serving Narayan or his own Self.

Give to the poor, the sick, the helpless and the forlorn. Give to the orphan, the decrepit, the blind, the helpless widows. Give to the Sadhus, Sannyasins, religious and social institutions. Thank the man who gives you an opportunity to serve and do charity. Give with right mental attitude and realise God through charitable acts. Glory to those who do charity with the right spirit.

Develop an understanding heart. Help your younger brothers in the spiritual path. Lift them up. Throw light in their path. Do not expect perfection from them. Be kind to them. They are doing their best, as you are yourself doing yours. You will grow by helping them.

Start vigorously the compaign of selfless service for purification of heart and getting descent of the divine light. Work in a systematic and methodical manner. Be fiery in service. Also be intent on service. Take a little rest and sleep only for some time. No pains, no gains. The fruit is immortality. May you become a dynamic Yogi. All glory to the Lord and His Name, and all selfless workers, real Karma Yogins who work in the spirit of the Gita's teachings, who are rare spiritual flowers.

In the spiritual field numbers do not count. It was one Sankara who established Adwaita Vedanta. Satan has the largest number of followers in the world. Shall we infer, therefore, that Satan's creed or cult is the best. A few sincere workers or members are an asset. You can work wonders with the assistance of these few members. Do not complain in future: "We are not doing any remarkable work for the uplift of the Society owing to the poor number of members."

Some form of silent service for the poor and the sick is in itself a good Sadhan for your spiritual growth, progress and quick evolution. Get hold of two or three persons to assist you. With united hearts a great deal of useful work can be turned out even by two or three persons.

Any split or dissension should be adjusted, the solution of continuity of peace must be cemented by friendliness, love and removal of misunderstanding. Then there will be the united whole. Then you can turn out much solid work. You must learn to penetrate into the hearts of all through love and constant service. This is the highest Yoga.

An Englishman, a District Collector saw a sick patient on the road in a dying condition. He was a very sympathetic man. He carried the patient to the neighbouring hospital on his own shoulders.

Look at this feeling of oneness. He is a practical Vedantin whether he knows the Upanishads or not. Many people and even Sannyasins say: "Mahatma Gandhiji is a simple Karma Yogi only. He is not a Vedanti." But really speaking there is no practical Vedantin greater than Mahatma Gandhiji. He lives in every moment of his life, the life of a practical Vedantin. He lives for the well-being of the world only. He is the nerve-centre for this world. He is one with all. He embraces all with pure love. Self-sacrifice, service, non-violence, truthfulness, purity, humility and unity make his creed. Still he never puts on a lable of a Vedantin. He never asserts the truth: "I am Brahman. Aham Brahma Asmi" to please the so-called Vedantins. That is his only defect or weakness.

The whole world is ready to oppose you. You will have to fight against the world, the whole world on one side and yourself alone on the other side. Even if the whole world opposes you, never move an inch from your position. Stick to your ideals and principles tenaciously.

Let the Tamasic do whatever they like. Let them spread false rumours. Let them back-bite and vilify. Stand adamant. Be not afraid of persecutions, dangers and oppositions of all sorts. The Lord is always with you. Truth alone will come out victorious, but not falsehood. Be truthful and sincere. Work unselfishly with redoubled force and energy.

3. PRACTICE OF KARMA YOGA

Work is worship. Work is Pooja of Narayan. Work is meditation. Don't forget this. You will have to evolve spiritually through work and meditation combined. Scavengering is Yoga when done in the right spirit. Feel that the whole world is your home (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam), one big family. You need not close the eyes and sit in a corner of a room.

Work that is done with Sakshi Bhav and Akartru Bhava, without expectation of fruits, is no Karma at all. It is burnt up in the fire of knowledge. It can never bind one to Samsara. Sri Sankara emphasised only that Sakamya-Karmas should not be done. Many orthodox Mayavadins of the present day have misunderstood Sri Sankara.

Selfless work (service of humanity) is the seed. Narayana Bhava (feeling that all creatures are manifestations of the Lord. I am serving the Lord in all being) while serving is the root. Utsaha (zeal, cheerfulness) is the shower. Expansion of heart is the flower. Purity of heart is the fruit. This is the path of Karma Yoga.

Paul and John have said: "God dwells not in temples made with hands, but in men and women in whose heart dwells the spirit of love and that finds expression in service for the good of all". The magnificent temple of God is the heart of man. Rich people build temples to get name and fame and put their name-slabs at the gate. Is this not great foolishness?

Ishwar is the Lord, the Creator, the Ordainer, the Upholder of everything. He dwells in all, high and low.

To serve others with Atma Bhava disinterestedly and untiringly, not to allow others to serve me and to expect any service from others is my Yoga, Religion and Dharma.

Forget your little self-arrogating personality. Forget your own interests, longings and desires and embrace all life. Work for others. Give up all sorts of pettiness. Become magnanimous, noble and generous. Then only you will slowly realise more and more your Atmic nature, the mighty infinite "I".

He who ignores his own pleasure and comfort and tries to help and serve others is really an advanced student in the path of spirituality.

He who is unselfish and devoid of Moha for the body (Deha-Adhyasa) can do any real service for humanity. Such a man only can have real Shakti (power). Such a man only will be fearless.

You cannot make any ornament with pure gold. If three per cent of some other metal is mixed with gold, then only you can make ornaments. So also Ishwara manifests with three per cent of Rajas and works in this universe. Therefore He is not affected. If people with ninety-per cent of Rajas and three per cent of Sattwa work in the world, they will be contaminated. Those who want to work for the well-being of the world must have abundant Sattwa or purity. Then only they will not be affected by the contact with the worldly people. Then only they can elevate people.

Give up hate and strife and greed for power, position and gold. Wear the crown of humility. Become pure and bright. Build your faith in God. Be steadfast in your Japa and meditation. Attain love and light.

Always have active habits. Sacrifice whatever you can for the good of others. Remove selfishness altogether.

Don't expect anything when you serve a man or when you give a gift. Thank him for giving you a good opportunity to serve him.

The man who serves the world really serves himself. The man who helps others really helps himself. Therefore, when you serve another man, when you serve your country, always think and feel that the great Lord has given you a rare opportunity to improve, correct and mould yourself by service. Be grateful to that man who has given you a chance to serve.

Do not lose any single opportunity in helping and serving others. Serve cheerfully and willingly. Never show Sunday-face or castor oil face. Do every work perfectly well with concentration and devotion. Utilise every minute in serving others in the best possible manner.

Serve others. Help others. Fill your hearts with pure, disinterested love. Do active good always.

Regular selfless social service daily with the Bhav: "I am serving God in manifestation" can take the place of Agnihotra, etc., can purify the heart and can bring about rapidly Chitta Suddhi.

Be absorbed in work. Give your full heart, mind and soul. Do not care for results. Do not think of success or failure. Do not think of the past. Have complete confidence. Practise self-reliance. Be cheerful always. Keep a cool balanced mind. Work for work's sake. Be bold and courageous. You are bound to succeed in any undertaking. This is the secret of success.

When you serve, remember that you work for God. Do every act as Ishwararpana (an offering unto God). You will soon grow spiritually. You will soon be transmuted into Divinity. Always scrutinise your motives.

When you apply any balm to the painful parts of a sick person, feel that you are touching the body of Virat Purush. You will evolve quickly. Your heart will expand. Feeling of hatred will soon vanish. Prem will increase. When the Shuddha Bhav wanes, bring it again quickly. After some steady practice for some months, you will be established always in the Shuddha Bhav. Struggle hard.

If you shampoo the leg of a man he is pleased with you. By touching a part of the body, the whole man is delighted. The leg is a part of a man. Even so if you please a man by service the whole Virat is pleased. Because man is part of Virat.

Self-realisation cannot be attained by any amount of Karma. Atma can be obtained by Vivek (discrimination), Vichar and Nididhyasan, Atmic enquiry and meditation.

The daily spiritual routine must be kept at any cost. During work, the Bhav should be continued. Feeling the presence everywhere and offering every work that you do unto the Lord as Ishwararpana (dedication, consecration to God) must be practised. Your two hands are the hands of God (Rama or Krishna). He works, sees, hears, feels, eats through you. Feel this. Feel this always.

Keep your view fixed to one object. Be steady and firm in the accomplishment of your purpose. Do not allow your mind to run in many ways. Develop serenity of mind. Do your work with a calm and quiet understanding and with Ishwararpana Buddhi. Every action will be transmuted into Yogic activity. You will attain success in everything.

You must reserve a certain portion of your earning for charity. Any occasional service will not be considered as Yoga. You must plunge yourself in regular service and forget yourself. This will be real Yoga.

God is Love. Love is God. Love is a means to attain

Godhead. Therefore, love is not only the means, but also the ideal or goal. It is unique. It knows no difference. It seeks no distinction. It is a great leveller. It is supreme. It surges in the pure heart of devotees. It removes hatred, prejudice. It is a mighty power on this earth. It prompts you to do noble actions and serve humanity with divine feeling. It goads you to see God in all and respect all. It gives you peace, bliss, joy and immortality.

Move amicably with all. Embrace all. Love all. Serve all. Develop adaptability and the spirit of selfless service and penetrate into the hearts of all through untiring service. This is verily Adwaitic realisation of unity or oneness.

Service of humanity must not be mere mechanical acts. It must be done with Atma Bhav. Service is Yoga for purification of heart and the consequent descent of light. All the workers must drill and hammer the mind with this Bhav.

If you feel for others more and more, that is a sign of expansion of heart and spiritual growth. Stick to your daily routine tenaciously.

When you wish to serve a friend, do not simply ask: "Do you want tea or milk?" This is only lip service. Take a cup of milk or tea and place it before the man with humility and joy. This is real service. Your courtesy must be uniform at all times, abundant and artless. Some cunning people with scanty courtesy will say when they meet a friend, "I know you will not take food. Will you take a cup of milk or tea now?" The friend will say, "No. No. I have just taken my tea." They will say, "at least take this cardamom or betel-nut." From the very beginning they do not want to give him either food or milk. Their spirit of service was on their lips only. The world abounds with such sort of people. They are really burden on this earth.

A raw untrained aspirant feels: "My preceptor is treating me like a servant or a peon. He is using me for petty jobs." He who has understood the right significance of Karma Yoga will take every work as Yogic activity or worship of the Lord. There is no menial work in his vision. Every work is Pooja of Narayana. In the light of Karma Yoga, all actions are sacred. That aspirant who always takes immense delight in doing works which are considered by the worldly man as menial services, and who always does willingly such acts will become a dynamic Yogi. He will be absolutely free from conceit and egoism. He will have no downfall. The canker of pride cannot touch him.

In the West cobblers and peasants have risen to a very great position in Society. Every work is a respectable work for them. A boy who applies polish to the boots in the streets of London for a penny, carries newspapers and journals in the afternoon for sale, and works as an apprentice under a journalist during his leisure hours at night. He studies books, works hard, never wastes a minute and in a few years becomes a journalist of great repute and international fame. In Punjab some graduates have taken to hair-dressing work. They have understood the dignity of labour.

A real Yogi does not make any difference between a menial and respectable work. It is only an ignorant man who makes such a difference. Some aspirants are humble in the beginning of their spiritual career. When they get some name and fame, some followers, admirers, devotees and disciples, they become victims to pride. They cannot do any service. They cannot carry anything on their heads or hands.

That Yogi who carries the trunk on his head without the slightest feeling in the Railway platform amidst a multitude of his admirers, disciples and devotees without making any outward show of humility must be admired. Sage Jada Bharata carried the palanquin of a Raja on his shoulders without murmuring. Lord Krishna shampooed the legs of a Raja when his barber-devotee was on leave. Sri Rama carried a pot of water for the ablution of one of his devotees. Sri Krishna took the form of a menial servant as Vithoo and payed the money to the Nawab on behalf of his devotee Dhamaji. If you really want to grow in the spiritual path, you must do all sorts of service daily till the end of your life. Then only you are safe. Do not stop doing service when you have become a famous Yogi. The spirit of service must enter every nerve, cell, tissue, and bone of your body. It must be ingrained in you. Then only you will become a real, fully-developed practical Vedantin. Is there any greater Vedantin or Karma Yogin than Lord Buddha? He still lives in our hearts because the spirit of service was ingrained in him and he spent his whole life in serving others in a variety of ways. A magnanimous soul, one without a second. You can also become a Buddha if you apply yourself diligently to selfless service with the right mental attitude.

Study the auto-biography of Mahatma Gandhiji. He never makes any difference between menial service and dignified work. Scavengering and cleaning of the latrine is the highest Yoga for him. This is the highest Pooja for him. He himself has done cleansing of latrines. He has annihilated this illusory little 'I' through service of various sorts. Many highly educated persons joined his Ashram for learning Yoga under him. They thought that Gandhiji would teach them Yoga in some mysterious manner in a private room and would give lessons in Pranayam, meditation, abstraction, awakening of Kundalini, etc. They were disappointed when they were asked to clean the latrine at first. They left the Ashram immediately. Gandhiji himself does repairing of his shoes. He himself used to grind flour and would take upon his shoulders the grinding work of others also when they were unable to do their allotted portion of work for the day in the Ashram. When an educated person, a new Ashramite feels shy to do grinding work, Gandhiji himself would do his work in front of him and then the man will do the work himself from the next day willingly.

All men who serve God are equal. They should eat and drink together irrespective of caste, creed or colour. The idea of superiority and inferiority should be given up if you really want to attain spiritual growth and develop devotion to God. Burn up all differences and see God only everywhere. Unite with all. Mix with all. Develop tolerance, adaptability, pure love, forgiveness, equal-vision.

Stick to your ideal and principles at all costs. Stand adamant even if the whole world opposes you. Be prepared to sacrifice your life in a noble cause.

If you want to work work independently. Slight work is necessary for beginners in meditation as relaxation for the mind when they come down from meditation. But the work must be congenial. It should be a help to spiritual contemplation—*cognate work.*

If you have got love for selfless work, if you thirst for purification of the heart (Chitta Shuddhi) through Nishkamya Karma, nature will utilise you for Her Divine work. She will make use of you as Her fit instrument. You will evolve quickly.

Surrender everything unto Him. Place your ego at His feet and be at ease. He will take complete charge of you. Let Him mould you in any way He likes. Let Him do exactly as He wills. He will remove all defects and weaknesses. He will play beautifully on this body-flute. Hear the marvellous music of His flute, the mysterious music of the soul and rejoice.

It is extremely difficult to perform real selfless service. Many people ascend the public platform under the garb of selfless workers, but they only serve themselves. Even some Sannyasins do the same. Is this not very sad?

Give up the delusion of agency, ownership of objects and the differentiation of that man or this man, I, you, he, etc. You will soon attain Jnana. Desires arise through non-discrimination (Aviveka). Desires will become extinct with the dawn of discrimination. Learn to discriminate between the real and the unreal. May you journey on quickly in the domain of eternal bliss of Moksha.

Actions should be performed without attachment, without the feeling of doing them for one's own personal purity. Perform works merely for God's sake, abandoning even such attachment as this, 'May God be pleased'. You must be prepared to abandon the work at any time however much interesting the work may be, however much you like the work. Whenever the inner voice of the soul commands you to give up the work, you must at once relinquish it. Attachment to any work will bind you. Understand well these subtle secrets of Karma Yoga and march boldly in the path of Karma Yoga.

Rely on your own self. Do not be credulous. Believe not in any dogmas. Hear the inner voice of the soul or promptings of the pure conscience. Be not a salve. Do not sell your liberty. Thou art the immortal soul. Destroy the inferiority complex. Draw power, courage, strength from within. Be free. Have no blind faith. Reason out carefully and then accept anything. Do not be carried away by blind surging emotions. Subdue them. Expand. There is a vast magazine of power and knowledge within you. It needs ignition. Then the whole mystery of the Self will be revealed unto thee. The darkness of ignorance will be dispelled by the light of knowledge of the Self. Constant meditation on the Atma is the master-key to open the realms of knowledge. I have given here the gist of Karma Yoga and Vedanta in a few lines. Taste the Nectar and attain immortality, eternal bliss and perennial joy. This is the goal of life. This is the end and aim of existence. Karma Yoga and Upasana will prepare you to realise this highest goal.

Chapter Nine

MAYA

1. WHAT IS MAYA ?

Maya is the illusory inscrutable power of Ishwara. Just as heat is inseparable from fire, so also Maya is inseparable from Ishwara. Maya is Ishwara's Upadhi. Ishwara has Maya under his control. Maya is neither Sat nor Asat. So Maya is Anirvachaneeya. This universe is all a display of Maya. All worldly experience is the effect of Maya. A sage who has realised his Self has transcended Maya.

Maya is Abhinna Shakti of Brahman. Abhinna means inseparable. Maya cannot be separated from Brahman. Just as heat is inseparable from fire, so also Maya is inseparable from Brahman.

You conclude by looking at the effect pot that there should be the cause for this pot. Even so you will have to conclude by looking at the world that there should be a cause for this world. That cause is Maya, the illusory power of Brahman.

What is beyond explanation, what is incapable of being explained by its very nature is Maya. Maya is Anirvachaneeya i.e., indescribable. It is an inscrutable illusory power of Brahman through which this world is projected.

Maya is cunning and deceptive. She is the illusory power of Ishwara. It is the finitising principle that creates finite forms in Infinite Brahman. She has got 2 powers, Avarana Shakti and Vikshepa Shakti. She hides the Truth through Avarana Shakti (veiling power). She projects this universe, creates false names and forms through Vikshepa Shakti (Projecting power).

Avarana Shakti conceals the Atma and veils the Jiva. Through the force of this Shakti, he is not able to separate himself from the five sheaths. This Avarana Shakti is divided into Asat Avarana and Abhana Avarana. The former is the cause for the notion that there is no Brahman. People say: 'If there is Brahman, will it not shine?' This idea is generated by Abhana Avarana. Asat Avarana is removed by indirect knowledge of Brahman, Paroksha Jnana, obtained through Sravana or hearing of the Srutis. Abhana Avarana is destroyed by direct knowledge of Brahman through meditation (Aparoksha Jnana).

Avyaktam, Maya, Mula-Prakriti, Pradhana (the chief or first), Gunasamya are synonymous terms. Avyaktam is the unmanifested state of Maya. Just as the tree exists in the seed in a subtle state, so also this world exists in a seed state in Avyaktam during Pralaya. Avyaktam and Pradhana are terms of the Sankhya philosophy. Mula Prakriti is a compound of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas like a three-stranded rope of white, red and black colours. In the Gunasamya Avastha or state, the three Gunas are in state of equilibrium. This is the state of Pralaya or Sushupti. Just as men go everyday into the state of deep sleep, so also the world goes into its Sushupti state during Pralaya. In Pralaya countless Jivas get absorbed in Mula Prakriti with their Samskaras like particles of gold that adhere to a ball of wax. The Karmas of the Jivas ripen at the end of Pralaya. Ishwara has to give the fruits of their Karmas. So He again projects this universe by mere willing.

There is excess of pure Sattwa in Maya. The reflection of Para Brahman in Maya is Ishwara. Maya is the Upadhi of Ishwara. It is the causal body of Ishwara. Ishwara has the Maya under his control. Ishwara is also called by the names of Avyakrita and Antaryamin. Ishwara is the instrumental cause of the universe (Nimitta Karana). He becomes the material cause by commingling Himself with the Tamas, just as the spider produced the web out of itself. Avidya is impure Sattwa. More Rajas is mixed with Sattwa. This is the causal body of the Jiva. This is the Anandamaya Kosha. Jiva and Ishwara experience the Sushupti or deep sleep, state through this Karana Sarira or causal body. This is the causal evolution.

In Junagad State a very strange incident happened quite recently. A girl was married in her twelfth year. Six years after her marriage she suddenly was metamorphosed into a male. She had all the distinguishing marks of a male. She left her husband's house and came back to her (rather his) father's house. Her father is a rich man. He died recently. Lawyers are consulted now whether the property should go to her (him) or not. Maya can do anything. Maya can create enunchs, hermaphrodites of both sexes), melodious feminine voice in males, harsh masculine voice in females, beard and moustaches in ladies, clean feminine face in males, beings with faces in their stomachs, hoofs in their heads, beings half-human, half lions, half horses. From this you can clearly infer that this world is quite illusory and unreal and Atman alone is real and everlasting. A close study of Nature will induce Vairagya and Viveka and inspiration for realising Atma, the Lord of Nature.

Even if the sun becomes cool and the moon hot, even if the fire burns downwards and ice becomes hot, even if the faecal matter emanates the scent of Otto de Rose, a Jnani never gets astonished. He knows that this is all the fantastic work of Maya.

Unlike Maya, which is subject to change, transforming itself into the universe, Brahman never changes. He is quite immutable, great and firm and unborn.

Because you cannot see the fire as it is covered by the ash, you cannot say that there is no fire. Even so, you cannot say that there is no Atma because it is concealed by body, mind, Prana and the senses.

2. AVIDYA

The connection of the Self with the Buddhi, its limiting adjunct, is due to Avidya or ignorance or wrong knowledge. This wrong knowledge can vanish only by Brahma Jnana. As long one does not get knowledge of Brahma Jnana, so long the connection of the soul with the Buddhi, body and the Indriyas will not come to an end.

Avidya is of two kinds viz., Moola Avidya (primitive ignorance) which constitutes the cause-body (Karana Sarira) or seed-body of the Jiva (individual soul) and Sthoola Avidya which envelops the objects outside.

Avidya is the root-cause for the Samsara. Eradication of ignorance, eradicates pain and enables a man to free himself from the round of births and deaths. The Vedanta Philosophy does not enquire into the why and how, original and nature of Avidya. It simply teaches us that it exists and that it is destroyed by knowledge of Brahman.

Just as the fire is covered with ash, so also this pure Immortal self-luminous Atma is covered by Avidya and its effects. viz., mind, egoism, selfishness, hatred, body, Prana and the senses. When the ash is removed, the fire burns brilliantly. Even so when Avidya is removed through knowledge of the Self, the self-resplendent Atma shines by itself.

From illusion springs separation, difference, duality, manifoldness and variety. Illusion is born of ignorance. All sorrows, tribulations, miseries, troubles have their root in ignorance. Ignorance creates illusion and separateness. Therefore destroy the ignorance by the sword of knowledge of the Self and become free.

Sense of separateness is a great fetter. Kill this sense of separateness by Brahma Bhavna or developing Adwaitic unity or consciousness and selfless service. The sense of separateness is an illusion created by ignorance or Maya.

If you remove the scabbord, you can behold the sword; if you remove the ashes, you can perceive the fire; if the clouds are dispersed, you can cognise the sun; if you remove the bed sheet, you can see the matress. Even so if you remove the ignorance which hides the Atma, you can directly behold the Self-luminous Atma.

Just as the mirror is rendered dim by a layer of dirt attaching to it, so also knowledge is veiled by Avidya. Therefore all people are deluded. They cling to this unreal and mistake the body for the pure Atma. They think that this illusory world of names and forms is quite real.

3. AHANKARA

(Cause for all the Miseries)

Srishti is of two kinds, viz., Jiva Srishti and Ishwara Srishti. There is no pain in Ishwara Srishti. Water quenches thirst. Fire gives warmth. Fresh breeze invigorates. Trees give shade. Cows give good milk. 'Mamata—mineness', my wife, my son, etc., are Jiva Srishti. This gives pain. When you hear: 'Horse is dead', you are not affected. When you hear 'My horse is dead' at once you begin to feel. The root of human sufferings is 'Mamata'. Destroy this Mamata and rest in Atmic Bliss.

It is impossible for a man who has intense Deha Abhimana (attachment for the body) to attain Atma Jnana, or realise oneness of life and oneness of consciousness.

How infinitely you are busy with your body and its conceits. "I, I, I, I am a doctor; I am a Englishman; I am an American; I am a Brahmin; I know everything; I am clever; I am very intelligent; I am very strong; I am the doer; I am the actor; I have done much charity; I have built a hospital in my father's name." There is no end for this 'I'. As soon as this identification with this perishable, impure body ceases, as soon as you realise that you are not this body, that 'this body is not I', that you are the Immortal all-pervading Sellf, all sorrows depart, all difficulties vanish, you are saved from this terrible Samsara. You will reach the abode of bliss and nectar and inexhaustible spiritual wealth, the city of deathlessness and drink the cup of immortality.

Fifty bombs can destroy a big city. But even five thousand bombs cannot destroy this egoism. So hard is egoism. The ignorant Jiva has hardened the egoism through too much thinkink of his personality and too much vanity. Even granite or diamond may melt at some time or other but it is very difficult to annihilate this egoism, though it is nothing in essence. A Bhakta or devotee destroys the egoism through self-surrender. A sage annihilates it through self-denial and Atmic enquiry or enquiry of 'who am I?'

Sivaji engaged thousands of coolies to build a fort. He had the Abhimana that he was feeding all these persons. Sivaji's Guru, Swami Ramdas, understood this. He called Sivaji and asked him to break a big stone that was lying in front of his palace. Sivaji ordered a servant to do the work. When the stone was broken a frog that was inside jumped outside. Ramdas asked: 'O Sivaji, who has arranged food for this little frog that was inside this stone?' Sivaji felt ashamed, prostrated before Ramdasji and said: 'O Guru Maharaj, thou art Antaryami. Thou hast understood my Abhimana, when I thought that these coolies are fed by me. Now Viveka has dawned in me. Protect me, O Lord, I am thy disciple."

Monkeys have got great Moha for their children. They carry the dead monkey, skeleton of their children even for a month. Moha is attachment to the physical body. These Samskaras are carried from animal kingdom to human kingdom. That is the reason why a man or woman entertains great Moha for the son.

You are born alone. You will die alone. You cross alone the different ties you meet with. You encounter alone whatever misery falls to your lot. Why do you then cherish Moha (infatuated love) for your children, wife, etc., false productions of Moha? Wake up. Beware.

You are born to conquer nature and thereby realise Atma.

Try to know the ways and habits of this Ahankara. It thirsts for self-aggrandisement or self-advancement, power possession of objects and enjoyment. Kill this Ahankara or egoism and selfishness. Be disinterested. Pin your faith to the opposite virtues, spirit of sacrifice and selflessness. Accept sacrifice and service as guiding principles of life. At once you will have a rich, expanded spiritual life.

Do not identify yourself with body, wife, son, objects. Give up all ideas of possessions. Never call anything: 'This is mine'. Be established on the one idea: 'Brahman alone shines and exists. I am Brahman.' Become a Jivanmukta. Enjoy Adwaitic, Brahmic Bliss, the final beatitude.

If the pot which is placed in a dark room and which contains a lamp inside is broken, the darkness of the room is dispelled and you see light everywhere in the room. Even so if the body is broken through constant meditation on the Self i.e., if you destroy Avidya and its effect viz., Deha Adhyasa or identification of the body and rise above body-consciousness, you will cognise the supreme Light of Atma everywhere.

There is no weapon sharper than Atmic Vichar to cut down the inveterate old enemy 'Ahankara.'

Man lives in flesh. He eats flesh. He embraces flesh. Flesh is Ahankara. Flesh is world. Maya plays through flesh. Mother Kaali does not want offerings of flesh. She wants offering of Ahankara. She wants her devotees to destroy Ahankara. Foolish people kill goats to please their tongue under the pretext of an offering to Mother Kaali. Horrible unpardonable crime and heinous sin indeed!

The snake-charmer extracts the two poisonous fangs of the cobra and then plays with it without any fear. The cobra now also raises its hood and hisses, but the snake-charmer knows that it cannot do any harm to him. Even so if you extract the two poisonous teeth viz., Ahanta and Mamata, you can move about fearlessly in this world. You will become a Jivanmukta and rejoice in the Atma within.

He who commits suicide on account of troubles does an 'unholy suicide'. He who kills egoism, selfishness, Vasanas, Indriyas, thoughts, etc., commits 'holy suicide'.

What is the use of wearing ordinary cow-dung ashes on the forehead? Burn the Ahankar and wear the ash formed out of destruction of this Ahankar on the forehead and body.

Devaki tried her level best to tie her baby Krishna with a piece of rope. She brought a rope to tie him. It was short by two inches. Again she brought a bigger rope. This was also short by two inches. She brought several ropes but at each time there was a shortage of two inches. What does this mean? Is there any philosophical significance? Yes, there is philosophy here. Devaki was a little bit egoistic. She had a strong idea of mineness also. She was very much attached to her baby. Lord Krishna wanted to eradicate 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness' from her mind. He indirectly taught to His mother: 'O dear mother, give up I-ness and mine-ness. Then only you can bind me by the cord of pure Prem."

If you kill the Queen Bee, the other bees which are collecting the nectar from the flowers in a place which is at a distance of five miles from the Queen bee also die at once. Similar is the case with the white ants also. If one man in the primitive African tribe suffers from any acute pain, the whole group of people who live at a distance of one hundred miles get the pain. The above cases are recorded after definite observation by psychologists in the West. There is intense instinctive feeling amongst the primitive tribes. That is the reason why if one is affected the whole group of people are affected. This goes to prove that there is one universal consciousness and that you can become one with the cosmic consciousness by melting your egoism or self-asserting principle and thereby can obtain the highest divine knowledge.

Chapter Ten

BRAHMA VIDYA

1. THE THREE BODIES (KARANA, SUKSHMA AND STHULA

The beginningless ignorance (Anadi Avidya) is called the Karana Sareera (causal body).

The actual body of Linga Sareera has got 17 Tattwas or principles viz., 5 Jnana Indriyas (organs of knowledge viz., ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose), 5 Karma Indriyas (organs of action viz., speech, hands, legs, genitals and anus), 5 Pranas, mind and Buddhi. When this astral body gets separated from the physical body, we call it death. This is made up of uncompounded elements (Apancheekrita). This is the instrument of enjoyment.

The mind performs all actions very speedily in the Linga Sarira and fluctuates. But the gross body (Sthula Sarira) knows not anything and is inert.

From the Rajasic portion of the Tanmatras are formed the organs of action or Karma Indriyas; from the Rajasic portion of Akasa, organ of speech is formed; from Vayu, hands; from the fire, legs; from the water, genitals; and from the earth, anus. From the sum total of Rajas of these five Tanmatras are formed the five Pranas or vital airs, viz., Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana. The subtle body or Linga Sarira is formed out of the 17 principles. During dream, it is Linga Sarira that functions. Pranamaya Kosha, Vijnanamaya Kosha belong to this subtle body.

Dik is the Devata for hearing; Vayu for touch; sun for sight; Varuna for taste, Asvini Kumaras for smell; Agni for speech ; Indra for Pani or hands ; Upendra or Vishnu for Pada or feet; Yama for Payu or excretion; Prajapathi for Upastha or generation.

The five organs of Knowledge are organs of action as well. Hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling are Karmas (actions). When the look is not chaste, when there is evil Drishti, when you look at a woman, the eye does an evil action.

The Jnana Indriyas are the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and the nose by which sound, touch, form, taste and smell are experienced. It is the contact of the senses with their objects such as sound, etc., that produces heat and cold, pleasure and pain. Keep the body under your control. Preserve the poise. Do not become a slave of your body. Make the body your tool or instrument.

Atma or Brahman transcends these three bodies.

Maya has prepared three coverings or coats for the man, viz., the causal body, the astral body and the physical body. The causal body corresponds to the innermost banian worn by a man, the astral body represents the shirt; the physical body corresponds to the thick overcoat. As soon as a man puts on the coats prepared by Maya, he forgets his essential divine nature.

Shuddha Sattwa or Maya forms the Karana Sarira of Ishwara. Malina Sattwa (impure Sattwa) or Rajas (Avidya) forms the cause body of Jiva. Ishwara controls Maya. Jiva is swayed by Avidya.

Karana Sarira is the result of Karmic impulses. It is the child of Karma, as it were. It lives and grows with it and will vanish if the influence of Karma can be destroyed.

Karana Sarira is like a small seed which contains the whole tree within itself. It is otherwise known by the name seed-body. The whole physical body, mind, Prana and senses have come out of this seed body.

All that goes deep into the intellectual nature of a man, all the higher emotions and higher aspirations do become indelibly impressed in the Karana Sarira of the man.

The Linga Sarira of the Yogi in passing through the earthly cover, becomes earthly, through water becomes watery and through fire, fiery. With the fiery body he goes to the air cover and with the airy cover to the Akasa cover. He passes also through the Tanmatras and senses them. He passes through Prana itself and becomes all action. Having thus crossed the Sthula and Sukshma coverings, the Yogi reaches the sixth covering that of the transformable or Ahankara Tattwa, which is the absorber of the Tanmatras and of th Indriyas. Thence he goes to Mahat Tattwa (intellect) and thence to Pradhana (Mula Prakriti) where all the Gunas find their resting place. Then becoming all Pradhana himself, he attains with the exhaustion of all Upadhis the transcendental pure Atma, which is an embodiment of peace and bliss.

Just as ghee, cream and cod-liver oil fatten this physical body, so also emotions and animal passions fatten the astral body. Annihilation of emotions and passions will bring about the destruction of the astral body.

This astral body also has got sex-distinctions, male and female, Kalpanic. In Swarga (heaven) there is Maithuna (coition) but no conception. The Linga Sarira is equipped with a Tejomaya body for enjoyment in heaven.

The astral body will appear as a dim vapour-like duplicate of the physical body. Occultists separate this astral or subtle body from the physical body, and move about with this subtle body in various places. Advanced Yogins condense the physical body and move in the air to distant places. This process demands expenditure of great deal of energy.

Fire cannot burn the astral body or Sukshma Deha. The subtle body can penetrate quite easily the strata of rocks. It can fly in the air. It can plunge deep into a conflagration of fire or the depths of the sea. It can move about with lightning speed. It can travel from Colombo to London in a second., It cannot be hurt even if it falls from the summit of a mountain.

This physical body comes, stays and goes. It is a combination of the five elements. It is insentient. It has a beginning and an end. This pure Atma or the Self neither comes nor goes. Why do you then mourn for it? My child, thou art Pure Intelligence itself.

This body is like a cart or motor car. It is without intelligence. Atma is the real driver of this body. The all-wise Atma dwells in this body. So this body has been made intelligent by this Atma.

The physical body is insentient, but it appears to be sentient on account of the soul's temporary union with it. When the soul departs from the body, the physical body remains as a log of wood. It disintegrates and decomposes. Although the soul pervades the whole body, yet it is a distinct entity capable of existing apart from it. It is the living truth. It is pure consciousness.

The Self or Atma is encased within the five sheaths. When one gradually develops his divine nature, these sheaths gradually wear away. His consciousness passes from the lower to the higher planes. He realises more and more freedom and bliss of the Self. His will becomes pure, strong and irresistible. He is able to control the senses and the mind by his strong will-power. Will-power is nothing but soul-force.

If you have a clear knowledge of the five sheaths, you will not be deluded. Therefore try to understand the nature of the five sheaths and their functions first. That which is distinct from the five sheaths is Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman, your own Self. This Atman is immanent in all beings. It exists everywhere and at all times. Negate, sublate or eliminate the sheaths or illusory Upadhis and identify yourself with the support of these sheaths, the one homogeneous, the Immortal Self.

The state of illumination and realisation of that Infinite Bliss eludes your grasp by delusion set up by the vehicles and vestures in which the soul is encased and their activities with which it identifies itself through accumulated Vasanas of countless births. But constant meditation and enquiry will remove all obstacles and help you in attaining the *summum bonum*.

That Brahman is the Self within all beings. That Brahman is without cause and without effect, without anything inside or outside, without defect, impurity, without length or breadth, without colours, shape or form. That Brahman is without limbs, parts, without name or caste, without hands or legs. That Brahman is an embodiment of wisdom, peace and bliss.

This Atma or Brahman is pure, calm, self-luminous, invisible, imperishable, eternal and independent. He is bodiless, breathless, endless. He stands in His own greatness. He is without support. He shines in His own Glory.

2. THE THREE STATES

Viswa is Abhimani of Jagrat Avastha or waking state. Taijasa is Abhimani of dreaming state or Swapna Avastha. Prajna is Abhimani of deep sleep state or Dridha Sushupti. This is in the microcosm or Pindanda.

A juggler throws the end of a thread up in the sky, climbs up by the help of the thread and vanishes after some time; his body falls to the ground in pieces. The pieces unite again and form the self-same juggler. The spectators do not care to understand the secret and meaning of this illusion. They are simply stunned for the time being. They are struck with wonder. Similarly the states of waking, dream and deep sleep resemble the throwing up of the thread. Viswa, Taijasa and Prajna represent the juggler who appears to climb up by means of the thread. The real director of the whole illusion is entirely aloof from the thread and the man who climbs up the thread. Just as the juggler stands all the while on the ground, completely unseen by the spectators owing to the power of illusion, so also Brahman, the Absolute stands for ever as a silent witness. He is not seen by the worldly people on account of the veil created by the Avidya. As soon as the veil is removed by meditation, Brahman shines in its native glory and splendour. The meditator becomes That when he knows That.

Jagrat is the waking state in which man enjoys the five gross objects of senses as sound, etc., through the five organs of knowledge viz., ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. He is conscious of the world. He has externalised consciousness (Bahih Prajna). Jiva is called Viswa in this state.

A king gets into his car and moves about in the city.

This corresponds to Jiva's wandering in the world in the wakeful state. He returns back and enters his palace. This corresponds to the dreaming state. He enters his bed room at night. This corresponds to the deep sleep state.

The surface of the lake is compared to the conscious mind. The bottom of the lake is compared to the sub-conscious mind. The objects that come from the bottom of the lake to its surface are compared to the images that come to the surface of the conscious mind from the sub-conscious mind. The Vikshepa Shakti that disturbs the mind is compared to the wind that disturbs the water of the lake. During the waking state the Vikshepa Shakti, the Sankalpas of the individual and the senses disturb the mind. In the dreaming state, the Vikshepa Shakti alone disturbs the mind. In deep sleep the mind is at perfect rest.

Sometimes during waking state also the mind passes into a state of quietude for a very short time and it is free from Sankalpa and the two currents of love and hate. In this state, the Prajna or consciousness is internal (Antah Prajna). It is not united with the mental Vrittis.

The experiences of he waking state are reproduced in the dream through Vasanas and Samskaras, with alterations, additions and mysterious combinations. It is the mind that creates all the dream pictures. Mind is the subject. Mind itself is the object. Mind itself assumes the forms of a woman, horse, cart, driver, road, river, city, etc.

The Self is covered by Avarana during sleep and by Vikshepa during the waking states. That which is above Avarana and Vikshepa is Atma. The Yoga Shastra says:

Nidralur jagaratyante yo bhava upajayate
Tam bhavam bhavayan nityam muchyate netaroyati.

The scientist draws his conclusions from his observations and experiences of the wakeful state only. Hence they are not correct. True experience includes the experience of the three states viz., waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. The Vedantin studies the three states. He gains more real knowledge from the deep sleep state. He gets a clue for the existence of the fourth state or the state of Tureeya from a study of the deep sleep state.

Swapna is the dreaming state in which man enjoys the five objects of senses and all the senses are at rest and the mind alone works. Mind itself is the subject and the object. It creates all dream-pictures. Jiva is called Taijasa in this state. There is Antah Prajna (internal consciousness). The scripture says: "When he falls asleep, there are no chariots in that state, no horses and roads, but he himself creates chariots, horses and roads." (Briha. Upa. IV, 3-9-10).

The dreaming world is separate from the waking one. The man sleeping on a cot in Calcutta, quite healthy at the time of going to bed, wanders in Delhi as a sickly man in the dream world and vice versa. Deep sleep is separate from both the dreaming and waking world. To the dreamer the dream-world and the dream-objects are as much real as the objects and experiences of the waking world. A dreaming man is not aware of the unreality of the dream-world.

He is not aware of the existence of the waking world, apart from the dream. Consciousness changes. This change in consciousness brings about the waking or dream experiences. The objects do not change in themselves. There is only change in the mind. The mind itself plays the role of the waking and the dream.

The dreamer feels that the dreams are real so long as they last, however incoherent they may be. He dreams sometimes that his head has been cut off and that he is flying in the air.

The dreamer believes in the reality of the objects of the dream as well as the different experiences in the dream. Only when he wakes up from the dream, he knows or realises that what he was experiencing was a mere dream, an illusion and false. Similar is the case with the Jiva in the waking world. The ignorant Jiva imagines that the phenomenal world of sense-pleasures is real. But when he is awake to the reality of things, when his angle of vision is changed, when the screen of Avidya is removed, he realises that this waking world also is unreal like the dream world.

In dream a poor man becomes a mighty potentate. He enjoys various sorts of pleasures. He marries a Maharani, lives in magnificent palace and begets several children. He gives his eldest daughter in marriage to the son of a Maharajah. He goes to the Continent along with his wife and children. Then he returns and visits various places of pilgrimage. He dies of pneumonia at Benares. Within five minutes, he gets the above experiences. What a great marvel.

As in dream, so in the waking, the objects seen are unsubstantial, though the two conditions differ by the one being internal and subtle, and the other external gross and long. The wise consider the wakeful as well as the dreaming condition as one, in consequence of the similarity of objective experience in either case. As are dream and illusion or a castle in the air, so say the wise, the Vedant declares this cosmos to be.

Dreams represent the contraries. A King who has plenty of food dreams that he is begging his food in the streets.

A chaste, pure aspirant dreams that he is suffering from a venereal disease. A chivalrous soldier dreams that he is running from the battle-field from fear of his enemy. A weak sickly man dreams that he is wrestling with a wrestler. A living man dreams that he is dead. He dreams also that his living father is dead and weeps in the night. He also experiences that he is attending the cremation of his father. Sometimes a man who lives in a city dreams that he is facing a tiger and a lion and shreiks loudly at night. He takes his pillow thinking it to be his trunk and proceeds to the Railway station. After walking a short distance he takes it to be a dream and comes back to his house. Some people dream that they are sitting in the latrine and actually micturiate in their beds.

Raja Janaka asked many Pundits: "Whether this is unreal or that is unreal?" One Pundit said: 'That is unreal.' Raja Janaka asked, 'O Pundit, what do you mean by 'that is unreal?' The Pundit replied 'dream is unreal. 'That' means dream.' Janaka was not satisfied. Another Pundit said: 'This (world) is unreal.' Ashtavakra said: "Both are unreal." Janaka asked: "O Ashtavakra Rishiji, what do you mean by 'both'? Ashtavakra replied: "Both the waking and dream states are unreal. Brahman alone is real." Raja Janaka was satisfied now.

Even in dream, you are in communion with the Lord. You will not behold any worldly pictures.

King Ajatashatru took the Brahmin Gargya by the hand and led him to where a man slept. The King spoke to him; but he did not arise. But when Ajatashatru touched him by his hands, he rose. Now the king asked the Brahmin: "Where was the man's mind, consisting as it does of knowledge, while he was asleep and whence has it just returned?" But Gargya could make no reply. Then Ajatashtru explained to him how the mind or the self of the sleeper roves in the dream, how all places belong to him and how he can be at will, now a great king, now a great Brahmin, but how again there is then a still highest and happier state viz.,when one has fallen into a dreamless sleep and no longer has he any consciousness of anything. This is the condition in which the self of man unaffected by the world of phenomena, rests in the true nature, in which there is no difference between the Atman and the Brahman.

Western psychologists hold that the sub-conscious mind operates even during deep sleep and that there is a little consciousness also even during deep sleep as the man remembers after waking that he enjoyed sound sleep. This is not right. The sub-conscious mind functions during dream only. There is no mind during deep sleep state. It gets involved into its cause i.e., it gets itself merged for the time being in Karana Sareera or causal body or the Anandamaya Kosha. But the causal body or Moola Avidya is functioning during deep sleep. The associated Chaitanya or the intelligence viz., Prajna is also present during deep sleep. It is the Prajna who remembers the bliss of deep sleep. Prajna, the intelligence that is associated with the deep sleep state; Taijasa, the intelligence that is associated with the dreaming state; and Viswa, the intelligence that is associated with the waking state are one. Causal body, seed body, Anandamaya Kosha, Moola Avidya or Ajnana are synonymous terms.

Jiva enjoys deep sleep in this nine-gated city of Maya. In this condition there is neither Vritti nor Sankalpa, neither alteration of moods nor play of senses,neither the function of

Raga-Dwesha currents nor the operation of intellect. In this state there is no presentation of false or true knowledge.

In sleep man marches inwards by withdrawing all the senses from external objects. A baby sleeps more than grown up adult. A grown up man sleeps more than an old man. Sleep prepares a man for vigorous activities by giving rest to the mind, senses and body. So sleep is all life. When a man is hungry, he rushes outside. This is the opposite state.

In deep sleep state or Sushupti, all senses and the mind are at perfect rest. The mind is involved into its cause, the Karana Sareera. The Jiva is called Prajna in this state. The Anandamaya Kosha is functioning. There is a veil between the Jiva and Brahman.

During sleep two things exist. They are Prajna and Moola Ajnana (or Avidya). There is no mind. The mind gets Laya in Moola Ajnana. Anandamaya Kosha, Karana Sareera, is another name for Moola Ajnana. Anandamaya Kosha (seed body) operates during sleep. Prajna is conscious of the bliss of sleep. He is not able to express his bliss during sleep though he is enjoying actually, just as the man who has caught hold of the ring that has fallen into a well by diving deep is not able to talk or express his feelings while he is underneath the water.

The happiness that you derive from deep sleep is positive bliss. It is not mere negative pleasure. This bliss is supersensual. It is not derived from direct contact with sensual objects. It is the causal body or Anandamaya Kosha that functions during deep sleep. The Avidya Vritti and Prajna (that Chaitanya that is associated with the causal body) are present during deep sleep. Mind and egoism are involved into the Ajnana. They are not present during deep sleep. This Prajna is conscious of the bliss of deep sleep. It is He who remembers the bliss in the form of Viswa in the Jagrat state. Whatever one has enjoyed actually can be remembered by him. Just as the man who has found out the ring that is fallen in a well by divine is not able to express his thoughts to the onlookers while he is in water, so also Prajna is not able to express his bliss. But Viswa, the Chaitanya that is associated with the physical body during waking state feels it. Viswa, Taijasa (Chaitanya associated with the astral body during dream), Prajna are one.

As soon as you wake up, the dream becomes unreal. The waking state does not exist in the dream. Both dreams and waking states are not present in deep sleep. Deep sleep is not present in dream and waking states. Therefore all the three states are unreal. They are caused by the three qualities Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Brahman or the Absolute is the silent witness of the three states. It transcends the three qualities also. It is pure bliss and pure consciousness. It is Existence Absolute.

This is the difference between deep sleep and Samadhi. When you return from deep sleep, you have no knowledge of the Self. You retain the same mind, the same Vasanas, the same thoughts, the same Samskaras which you had before you had gone to sleep. But in the case of Samadhi, the Yogi or the sage comes out with full illumination. He is endowed with Knowledge of the Self. His old Samskaras are burnt in toto. There is annihilation of mind (Manonasa). He is a changed man now with equal-vision and balanced mind. He is free from all doubts, fear, desires. He can clear the doubts of all.

Swoon is only half-sleep. You should not mean by this that man in swoon half enjoys Brahman or that the soul becomes half-unites with Brahman.

The state of swoon partly resembles sleep. The senselessness belongs wiwth one half to the side of deep sleep, with the other half to the side of death. It is the door to death. If there is a remnant of Karma, he comes back to consciousness; if no work remains, he dies. The mind in swoon neither rests in Karana Sarira nor in the Hita Nadi in the throat. It is in a state of stupefaction. It is in a state of being stunned. It takes its rest in a place between Hita Nadi and Karana Sarira.

In swoon there is half of deep sleep as it is different from the other three states. A man in swoon does not perceive any object. The body of a swooning person falls down on the ground. Therefore a man in swoon is not awake. He is not dreaming as he is totally unconscious. Is he dead? No, as he has life and warmth. He continues to breathe Swoon is not deep sleep. The body of a man in swoon trembles and his face is dreadful. His eyes are staring wide open. But a man who is sleeping looks calm and peaceful. His eyes are closed. His body does not tremble. A sleeping man may be awakened by a slight touch with the hand or by calling him by his name, whereas a man in swoon cannot be awakened even by a blow with a stick. Swoon caused by a blow on the head with a stick while sleep is due to weariness or fatigue.

Deep sleep is the seed and the states of wakefulness and dream are the fruits thereof. Deep sleep is but very little removed in one of its aspects from Samadhi or union with Paramatma. If it were not so and the consciousness were not to revert again to the condition of wakefulness and dream, deep sleep (Sushupti) would be but the state of Samadhi or supreme consciousness.

Tureeya or the fourth state transcends the above three states. The sage who has controlled the mind and the senses, who is above body-consciousness and the three Gunas, who is identifying himself with the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman is in the enjoyment of this blissful or super-consciousness state. This is the transcendental state of Moksha.

The slight interval or Sandhi between deep sleep state and the waking state is called Tushnim Bhoota Avastha or state of quietude of mind. Similarly there is an interval or Sandhi between the waking and the deep sleep state. In the former Sandhi, the mind is coming out with the experience of Rasa of deep sleep; in the later Sandhi it is going into the recesses of the heart with the experience or Rasa of the worldly objects. In these two Sandhis the mind is free from Sankalpa and attraction or repulsion. The scriptures say:

Swapnaprabodhayoh Sandhavatmano gatimatmadrik ...
Pasyan bandham cha moksham cha mayamatram na vastutah.

The seeker after Atma Tattwa should see it at the junction between the waking and sleep state. He should see that bondage and liberation is due to delusion of Maya of the individual and not a reality—Bhagawatam VII, 3-v.

3. BRAHMA VIDYA (JNANA)

Brahma-Vidya or the science of the Self is intended for that person who has become pure in mind by the performance of obligatory duties, who has no attachment for the fruits of actions.

Kevala Jnana is the only means (Sadhana) for Moksha. Jnana arises through Vichara or proper understanding of the right significance of the Mahavakya (great sentence of the Upanishads) viz., 'Tat Twam Asi', which shows the identity of Jivatma and Brahman.

The fire of death can be quenched by the water of knowledge. Knowledge can be obtained by meditation on Atma. The knowledge of the Atma does not effect emancipation. It is emancipation itself.

"Among all those good acts performed in this world, said the sages, is no single act held more powerful than the rest in leading men to beatitude. Of all those duties, answered Bhrigu, the principal is to acquire a true knowledge of Self, the real Entity; that is the most exalted of all Sciences, because it ensures immortality." Manu Smriti Chap. XII.

The Ganges has three states. In winter she is quite pure like Shuddha Brahman. She is quite clear and transparent. In summer she changes her form. She is filled with icy water. She puts on the Ishwar Swaroop, i.e., Maya Visishta Chaitanya, i.e., Chaitanya associated with Maya. In rainy season the water becomes muddy. She puts on Jiva Swaroopa, Avidya Avishta Chaitanya, i.e., Chaitanya associated with Avidya. So also the Jiva through devotion assumes the form of Ishwara, through Jnana becomes identical with Para Brahman.

Brahman is real and eternal. This body is unreal and perishable. From the Knowledge of the Self (Atma) and not-self (Anatma) springs the stream of immortality or the ancient wisdom of the seers of the Upanishads.

You will have to acquire the knowledge of the Self which gives emancipation through great exertion. It is the knowledge of Brahman that becomes the means of emancipation. The knowledge of Brahman is a means to the attainment of the highest. Attainment of Brahma Jnana is Para Vidya. Knowledge of Brahman totally destroys ignorance, the cause of Samsara.

Just as a man who does not know the place of a hidden treasure is not able to find it even though he passes over it several times daily, so also you are not able to find out Brahman or the Immortal Self though you daily enter into Him in deep sleep. If the ignorance is destroyed through knowledge, you will have direct cognition of the supreme Tattwa.

Just as the sun destroys immense darkness, so also the Knowledge of the Self destroys the great ignorance.

The flame of a lamp destroys immense darkness. Even so, knowledge of the Self destroys ignorance or Avidya the root-cause for human sufferings and tribulations. Therefore attain the knowledge of the Self, get illumination and roam about happily.

What is neither short nor long, neither that nor this, neither that much nor this much—that should be understood to be Brahman. By knowing Brahman everything else becomes known; there remains nothing else to be known.

By acquiring Brahman Jnana, what is not thought of, becomes thought of; and what is not known becomes known.

Vairagya by itself cannot give you Moksha and destroy the Moola Ajnana (the primitive ignorance). It is only knowledge of Atma that will destroy the Avidya and its effects of Avidya and mind, Indriyas, Prana and physical body.

Vidya and Avidya are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are. Avidya is otherwise known as Maya. Avidya binds one to Samsara. Vidya helps one to cross the Samsara.

Saunaka, a great Grihastha, questioned Angiras: "O Bhagavan, what is that which being known, all this becomes known." It is Para Vidya by which the immortal Brahman is known. 'Kasmin Bhagavo vijanate nidam vijanatam bhavati'.

When knowledge dawns, one attains Moksha or deliverance. He is freed from all sorrows and pains. He enjoys transcendental bliss or abiding pace that ever is the same.

The following are the Pramanas (proofs of knowledge) of Vedant:—

1. Pratyaksha Pramana (direct proof)
2. Anumana (inference)
3. Sabda Pramana (testimony of the Vedas and realised persons)
4. Upamana (simile)
5. Arthapatti (presumption), and
6. Anupalabdhi (knowledge of non-existence)

Japa, Tapas, etc., thin out the Samskaras. Knowledge alone completely eradicates them.

Direct knowledge of the Self is not possible without the practice of concentration and meditation. You will have to make a conscious inward search and fix the mind on the supreme Self after purifying and steadying the mind by the practice of the fourfold means.

There is no light like that of knowledge of the Self. There is no treasure like that of contentment. There is no virtue like that of Satya (truthfulness). There is no bliss like that of the Soul. There is no friend like Atma. Therefore know your own Self. Develop contentment. Speak the Truth. Drink the bliss of the Soul. Befriend Atma.

It is only through Brahma Jnana that emancipation is achieved. Srutis emphatically declare: "Whosoever knows Brahman, overcomes death. There is no other way to emancipation." Hridaya Jnanena Mukti—Freedom is attained through Knowledge of the Self. He is never born again.

The performance of rituals cannot remove Avidya or ignorance, which is the root-cause of Samsara, but it can purify the heart when done with Nishkamya Bhav. Knowledge of Atma alone is the means of uprooting ignorance and its effects.

This world of name, form and action is superimposed on Brahman or the pure, all-pervading, immortal Self by ignorance, just as snake is superimposed upon the rope. This seeming duality with its distinctions of doer, enjoyer will vanish when you attain knowledge of the Self.

4. ADHYASA (SUPERIMPOSITION)

'Adhyasa' means the superimposition of the attributes of one thing on another thing as for example, the attributes of silver are superimposed on mother-of-pearl.

It means superimposition in the sense of mistaken ascription or imputation to something of an essential nature or attributes not belonging to it. Snake is superimposed on rope. This is Adhyasa. Kalpana, Bhranti, Adhyasa are synonymous terms. This world and body are superimposed upon Brahman or Atma.

The relation between the body and Atma is not one of Samyoga or Samavaya Sambandha. There cannot be any real connection between matter and spirit (Prakriti and Purusha). The connection is one of Adhyasa Sambandha (superimposition) It is the wrong notion in the mind that has connected Atma with the body. Atma is always Asareeri (bodiless) or Atanu.

All differences are due to Upadhis or limiting adjuncts. As the limiting adjuncts are illusory or false, the differences caused by them are also false. Therefore Brahman alone who is one without a second is the balance left behind. He alone exists in the three periods of the time.

Adhyasa is the way of the mind to mistake one thing for another, the unreal for the real. It is not the cause of the appearance of this world. It is the cause of mistaking it as the real. It is born of ignorance. You mistake the body for the real Self. You identify yourself with the body. You are attached to it. You cling to it. This is Deha Adhyasa. Knowledge of the immortal Self will destroy the Adhyasa.

Start the anti-current and always try to identify yourself with the pure all-pervading Atma.

This world is mere superimposition on Brahman (Adhyaropa). Apavada Yukti will eliminate this superimposition. Apavada is the abandoning of the notion that this universe is not really in Brahman like that of the wrong notion of silver in mother-of-pearl or water in the mirage and the being firmly convinced of the reality of the cause and not of the effects. There is no effect which is distinct from the cause. The pot is not separate and distinct from clay, the cloth is not separate and distinct from the thread, the golden ornaments are not separate and distinct from gold. Even so this universe is not distinct and separate from Brahman.

That is Soul in which Jnana abides. It is of two kinds, Jivatma (individual soul) and Paramatma (supreme Soul). The supreme Soul is God, the omniscient. He is one only and free from joy and sorrow. The individual soul dwells in each body. It is all-pervading and eternal.

This body is your instrument but is not yourself. To be timid is the greatest sin. To be selfish is the greatest crime. To identify oneself with the body is the greatest blunder. To forget one's own Atma is the greatest error.

I will tell you a little story. Just hearken with rapt attention. There was once a baby lion left by its dying mother among some sheep. They took care of the baby lion. The baby lion grew into a big lion and bleated 'Ba-a-a'. One day another lion came and heard the sheep-lion bleating along with other sheep. He was struck with amazement. He asked the sheep-lion: "Brother, what is the matter with you? Why you are here in such an abject state?" The sheep-lion replied: "I am a sheep. I am happy here amongst my brothers and sisters." You are under a false delusion." He took the sheep-lion to the side of a river and showed him his reflection in the water. He said to the sheep-lion: "Look at your reflection now. You are a lion. I am a lion." The sheep looked at the reflection and then said in joy: "What a terrible mistake I have committed. I am certainly lion indeed. I am not a sheep at all." He made a terrible roar and went along with the new lion.

Brother, you are also bleating like the sheep-lion. You have forgotten your real divine nature. You are hypnotised by Maya. De-hypnotise yourself and roar OM OM OM and become a lion of Vedanta. Thou art the Immortal Self. Do not identify yourself with the perishable body. Identify yourself with the undying, eternal Brahman and be free.

Just as the witness of a chair is different from the chair and is not the chair, so is the witness of this body. The nature of the witness is reality, bliss and knowledge. The chair and body are the insentient. Know, O Ram, therefore that you are not the body; you are the witnessing consciousness or Intelligence.

The appearance or duality or the apparent world of names and forms which is a stumbling block in the attainment of knowledge of the Atma must be dissolved. Then only you can know the true nature of Brahman. This does not mean that the objects animate or inanimate must be destroyed. The notion of duality must be abandoned. The names and forms should be sublated and the hidden essence must be grasped. As soon as the ignorance is destroyed the whole world of names and forms which had been hiding Brahman from you will melt away like the pictures of a dream.

Just as the water in the pot that is placed in the ocean becomes one with the waters of the ocean when the pot is broken, so also when the body-pot is broken by meditation on the Atma, the individual soul becomes identical with the supreme Self.

Atma is indivisible, infinite and all-pervading. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda. The body is composed of many parts. It is finite. It is composed of flesh. And yet ignorant men identify the two. Can any ignorance be worse than this?

Atma is always the witnessing subject. It can never be the object. The subject is the universal Self whose nature is intelligence (Chit). The subject comprises whatever is of a non-intelligent nature Jada, viz.,bodies with their senses and the objects of senses.

How can one describe the glory and greatness of Brahman. Even the Vedas have sung in praise of Him according to their limited capacity. No one has been able to find out His beginning or end. He walks without feet, grasps without hands, hears without ears, sees without eyes, tastes without a tongue, smells without a nose, feels without a skin,talks without a mouth, because He is a mass of pure consciousness. He is all-pervading. He has hands, feet, heads, faces everywhere. He is a wonderful entity. He is beyond the reach of mind and speech.

To define Brahman is to deny Brahman. The only adequate description of Brahman is a series of negatives. That is the reason why the sage Yajnavalkya declares in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad about Brahman as "Neti, Neti—not this, not this'. This means that the residue left after sublating the names and forms is Brahman.

Knowing the nature of Brahman or Atma as such, attain freedom or perfection. Think yourself as bodiless. Identify yourself with the supreme Self and enjoy the supreme peace and eternal bliss of your all-pervading Soul.

"Sir, Brahman has no form. How can you say 'Brahmakara Vritti?'" "I mean, my child, Brahman has not got the form which Mayaic objects have. Sat-Chit-Ananda itself is His form. Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam are His forms."

Just as you cannot separate the pictures from the canvas, the engravings from the stone, so also you cannot separate the names and forms from the substratum, Adhishthana, Brahman.

Ear-rings, bracelets, armlets, necklaces are superimposed on gold. Similarly, all these appearances, names and forms are superimposed on Brahman, the support or basis for everything.

Atma is one and the same in all beings. It appears different in different persons on account of the Upadhi or limiting adjunct, Antahkarana (mind). Akasa is one and the same. On account of Upadhis of pot, cloud, room,etc., it is differentiated as Ghata-Akasa (pot-ether), Megha-Akasa (cloud-ether), Mat-Akasa (room-ether), etc. When the Upadhi—pot is destroyed, when the pot is broken, the pot-ether becomes identical with the universal ether. When the Upadhi—Antahkarana—is annihilated by Sadhana, the individual becomes identical with the all-pervading consciousness.

An ignorant man only says that the Jiva and Brahman cannot be identical. He says that the former is subject to misery and the latter is above all misery. This is not correct. Jiva suffers on account of his identification with the body and mind. Jiva experiences the pangs of worldly existence on account of his ignorance and connection with the mind and body. When the ignorance is destroyed, through knowledge of the Self, when the connection with the body and mind ceases, when the mind is annihilated through destruction of desires, cravings, thoughts and egoism, the Jiva becomes identical with Brahman, Jivahood vanishes. He attains Brahmanhood.

The mother-of-pearl does not for certain put on and give up its true nature, while becoming the object of true or false knowledge. The knower, however, fancies it to be something different from what it really is.

An ignorant worldly-minded man who identifies himself with the physical body is a veritable cooly or Railway porter who carries this bundle of his own body daily wherever he moves.

Man in essence is a soul. He is fundamentally a spirit. He has put on this body to find out the Atman who is hidden in the chambers of his heart, to attain eternal bliss and to serve humanity with Atma Bhav.

Why dost thou weep, my child. Thou art the highest Truth. Thou art eternal bliss. Thou art the one un-changeable entity. Thou art beyond the reach of mind and senses. Thou art infinite, indivisible and immortal. Thou art the Absolute One pervading everywhere. Thou art unbounded by time, unlimited like the space. Thou hast neither birth nor death. Good and evil cannot touch thee.

Moksha is freedom from births and deaths. It is the attainment of eternal bliss. It has neither space nor time in itself; nor is there in it any state, external or internal. You are bound to attain Moksha or the final emancipation. Moksha is your goal. Kill this little 'I' or egoism through enquiry of 'who am I?' You will attain Moksha and shine as an Emperor of this world. May you attain Moksha in this very birth.

It will take a long time for the complete destruction of Deha-Adhyasa (identification with the body); and when you are perfectly established in Brahman, it will completely disappear. The more the Brahma-Bhavana, the more the Deha-Adhyasa will be thinned out. Therefore strengthen your Brahma Bhavna daily by repeated Brahma-Chintan, by constant thinking on Brahman.

Chapter Eleven

VEDANTA

1. VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Vedanta holds the first place amongst all systems of philosophies. It is a system of philosophy in which human speculation has reached its very pinnacle or acme. It is indeed a unique system of thought, which demands a subtle, sharp intellect to grasp its fundamental principles. It is unique in the boldness of its conclusions. It is absolutely free from all shades of dogmatism or per doctrines.

Vedanta is no creed, no ceremony or form of worship. It is the science of the Reality. It boldly proclaims with emphasis that you are the immortal, all-pervading Atman, the universal soul or the Supreme Brahman in essence, in reality.

Vedanta is very practical. It does not preach an impossible ideal. Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Shankara and many others realised the truth of the Vedanta, you can also realise it if you will. What is wanted is regular and constant practice. You must have perfect faith in the utterances of the Srutis, the words of your Guru. You must have perfect faith in yourself first.

Vedanta or the knowledge of the Self is not the sole property of Sannyasins or recluses who live in forests or caves of the Himalayas. Study the Upanishads and you will find that many Kshatriya kings who were very busy in the affairs of life were in possession of Brahma Jnana. They gave instructions to Brahmin priests even.

Vedanta is the religion of the Upanishads. It is the property of all. It has no quarrel with any religion whatso ever. It preaches universal principles. It inculcates the idea of that universal religion which is the fountain-head of all the religions of the world. It is a great leveller. It unites all. It gives rooms to all.

Vedanta can be practised only by those who are endowed with real, lasting, deep Vairagya or dispassion and who lead the path of renunciation. For those householders who do not possess burning Vairagya, who are still attached to their sons, wife and property, but who possess a dull type of Vairagya, Bhakti Marga combined with selfless service is most suitable.

Vedanta means 'no slavery'. It gives freedom to all. It embraces all. It is the religion of the Upanishads. It is the religion of Paramahamsa Sannyasins.

This is the sum-total of Vedanta: "I am the all-pervading, self-luminous, immortal, indivisible, eternal, Sat-chit-ananda Brahman".

The fundamental principles of Sri Sankara's system of Vedanta are beautifully summarised in the following couplet: 'I express in half a verse what has been said in crores of books: Brahman is real, the world is phenomenal (unreal) and the soul (Jiva) is none else than Brahman'.

Atma is priceless treasure for the sincere aspirant. Spiritual wealth is the inexhaustible wealth. Lord Jesus says: 'The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which some one found and buried it again and rejoicing in his find, went home and sold everything that he had and bought that field' (Mathew 13-44).

The fruits that accrue from works are perishable. So the man of discrimination loses all attachment for works. He longs to attain Self-realisation only.

Maitreyi sat at the lotus feet of sage Yajnavalkya and learnt that the Self is imperishable, unattached, free and not subject to pain or destruction. This is real education.

The reputed scientist Sir J.C. Bose has demonstrated by his newly invented instruments that metals and vegetables have nervous system, pulsation and sensation. He says that a plant. can be drugged, poisoned, exalted, depressed and fatigued. A lump of gold responds to scientific experiments and when it is cut into small pieces, each piece responds similarly. There is no essential difference between an animal and a plant. His wonderful researches have opened the eyes of the Western scientists also. They have proved the unity of life and consciousness and corroborated the truths of Vedanta.

You are a lion but for many ages you have hypnotysed yourself to be a small lamb. Now stand up. Determine to de-hypnotyse yourself and roar again like a lion, a lion of Vedanta. Roar OM OM OM.

You dream sometimes that you are dead and that your relatives are weeping. Even in that supposed death-state, you see and hear them weeping. This clearly indicates that even after the apparent death, life really persists. You exist even after the physical sheath is thrown out. That existence is Atma or the big I.

You feel 'I exist.' This itself clearly proves that God exists. Existence is God or Brahman. You always feel despite your possessions and all sorts of comforts that you are in want of something. There is no sense of fulness. If you add to yourself the all-full God only, you will have fulness. When you do an evil action, you are afraid. Your conscience pricks you. This also proves that God exists and witnesses all your thoughts and actions.

The 'over-soul' of the Western philosophers is the Brahman of the Upanishads or Atma of the Vedantins. The Supreme Soul or Paramatma which is the support for the individual soul is the 'Oversoul.' The 'Oversoul' is the substance of Spinoza or the "Thing in itself' of Kant. The essence of Vedanta has slowly infiltrated into the minds of the Western Philosophers and they have accepted now the existence of the one eternal principle or the Immortal Soul which is distinct from body and mind.

Even if the tenant has not seen the Maharaja, he knows that there is one Maharaja who rules the State from the orderliness kept up throughout the State. Similarly if you have not seen God face to face, you can know His existence from the order maintained in the universe.

Who is making physical body—a toy made up of clay—dance in a variety of ways? Who is the wire-puller of this body? Find Him out.

When mind, speech, ears, eyes and other organs are asleep, the Prana alone is awake. Who causes the vibration of Prana? Who is the support for this Prana? It is Brahman. He is the Yoni or womb for everything.

Though the external phenomena themselves vary every second, the Ultimate Reality, that is invariably associated with all of them is unchanging.

You will find in the Brahmananda Valli of Taittireeya Upanishad: 'From this Atman was born Akasa; from Akasa Vayu; from Vayu, fire; from fire, water; from water, earth;

from earth, the herbs; from herbs, food and from food, man, and this man is made of the essence of food.' Chap. 11—1.

This Samsara or the cycle of life is beginningless. Karma is also beginningless. That which has no beginning has also no end. This is universally recognised law. Therefore there is no end for this Samsara. It has an end only for that sage who has attained gnosis or knowledge of the Self.

You are deluded or deceived by the senses. That which is changing and perishable cannot be real. There is neither mind nor matter, neither world nor creation in reality. Brahman alone shines in His pristine Glory. This is the absolute Truth.

Direct intuitional knowledge of Brahman alone can free us from the round of births and deaths. There is no other way. Srutis emphatically declare:

Vedaahametam purusham mahaantam
Adityavarnam tamasah parastaat

Tameva viditvaatimrityumeti
Naanyah pantha vidyate ayanaaya.

"I know that great Purusha who is resplendent like the sun and who is beyond the darkness of ignorance. It is only by knowing Him that one attains Immortality; there is no other road to eternal bliss." (Swetaswatara Upanishad III-8)

Reality or Brahman can be realised by man. Many have attained Self-realisation. Many have enjoyed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Sri Sankara, Sri Dattatreya, Mansoor Shams Tabriez, Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha were all realised souls who had direct perception of the Truth or cosmic vision or Aparoksha Anubhuti. But one who has known cannot communicate it to others for want of means. Even the knowledge acquired by the five senses which are common to all cannot be communicated to others. You cannot tell the taste of sugar-candy to a man who has never tasted it. You cannot communicate the idea of colour to a born blind man. All that a teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the Truth or the path that leads to the unfoldment of intuitional faculty.

The Veda exclaims from time immemorial: "*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*—Existence is one, Sages call it by different, names.' (Rig Veda I, 164-46). God, Brahman Allah, Ishwara, Jehova, Ahurmazda, etc., are one. I offer my worship to that supreme Being—one Eternal homogeneous essence, indivisible mass of Bliss and Intelligence—whom sages describe in a variety of ways through diversity of intellect.

Call It by whatever name you like, rest, peace, perfection, freedom, fullness of life, Nirvana, Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Sahaja Avastha, Kaivalya or Moksha; towards it you strive in all your activities unconsciously as these transient, mundane objects do not give you full satisfaction. Every movement of the foot is towards Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. Even a rogue or a vagabond is marching towards that immortal city of Brahman though he is in a circuitous or zigzag path.

Brahman is absolute consciousness. Consciousness alone is absolutely real, while the insentient matter is real only from the standpoint of our ordinary worldly experience (Vyavahara).

Kaala is the flow of time. Kaala is the Shakti of Bhagawan or Lord (Kaala Shakti). Atma or Brahman is beyond time, Kaalaateeta. All objects that are conditioned in time, space and causation are perishable. That which is beyond time is Imperishable.

Brahman is free from sorrow. Jiva is full of misery. Brahman is eternally free. Jiva is bound. Brahman is Omnipotent (Sarvashaktiman), Omniscient (Sarvajna), infinite (Aparichhinna) and all-pervading (Vibhu, Sarvavyapi). Jiva is Alpajna, Alpa-Shaktiman, Parichhinna and Ekadesika.

Brahman is that transcendental Purusha, who shines in the heart of all beings. He is the Guru of Gurus, Lord of lords, Deva of Devas, Sun of suns, Light of lights. He is the limitless I, an ocean of bliss and knowledge. He is the substratum for everything. He is your real Self. He is birthless, deathless, timeless, spaceless, causeless, motionless and changeless.

Thou art the immortal Self. That Atman cannot be hurt by bombs or weapons. It is invulnerable, invincible, imperishable. Dwell on the inner Self. Dwell on the above ideas. There is no room for lamentation or fear. Be bold. Be cheerful.

He who has realised 'I am that Supreme Self who is changeless, self-luminous, eternal, pure, perfect, indivisible, all-pervading' is free from bondage. He who has not realised this is in bondage.

If you realise this immortal soul which is hidden in your heart and all these forms of the three knots viz., Avidya (ignorance), Kama (desire) and Karma (action) are rent asunder, if the chain of ignorance viz., ignorance, non-discrimination, egoism, likes and dislikes, Karma, body, is broken, you will be freed from the round of births and deaths; you will enter the city of deathlessness.

Mahat is the first modification (Vikriti) of Prakriti. Mahat is Buddhi (intellect). It is of two kinds viz., Vyashti (individual) and Samashti (collective, cosmic). Cosmic Mahat is Brahma, the creator.

Mula Prakriti is another name for Maya or Avyaktam. It is the basis or seed for the manifested universe. During Pralaya or involution, the whole universe gets involved in this Mula Prakriti, like the set of vessels in the tiffin-carrier or the pillows, carpet, blanket, bed-sheets, etc., in the bed canvas (holder).

Swaroopa means Atma or Brahman. Swaroopa Dhyana means meditation on the Reality or Truth (Atma or Brahman). Vedanta means end of Vedas or knowledge. All the four Vedas came out of the expiratory breath of Brahma. Study of Mandukya Upanishad alone is enough for a comprehensive understanding of Brahman.

The projection of the world out of Brahman need not make Brahman a Vikari, one who changes. Brahman need not be affected a bit at all. The change is not a chemical change. Brahman has projected this universe without being affected in any way. The one Brahman through His Shakti can put on all these countless names and forms and appear as many. There is no change in Himself. The world is mere appearance. Brahman Himself appears as stone, tree, stars, etc. He does not require any instruments or hands for making these forms. He is Chaitanya, self-luminous intelligence. By mere willing He can bring forth countless worlds. Just as the potentiality of a seed brings forth a tree, so also the Swabhava of Brahman brings forth this universe. Projection co-exists with Existence. The why and how of the universe and the riddle, how Avidya with Asat, Jada, Duhkha properties can exist in Brahman with the contrary attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda can hardly be understood by the finite intellect. Acquire Brahma Jnana. Then and then only you will get the answer for this 'Ati Prasna' or transcendental question.

In one place in the Srutis, you will find that Brahman is 'Avangmanogochara—beyond the reach of speech and mind,' and in another place you will find 'Manasaiva Drishtavyam—Brahman should be seen by the mind only.' These are not conflicting, contradictory statements. It means that Brahman is to be seen or realised by that pure, subtle, sharp mind which is free from egoism, Moha, lust, anger, etc., and which is equipped with the four means of salvation. Pure mind is nothing but Brahman Himself.

All phenomena are really non-existent, like the mirage, mere false appearances. What is fleeting must be unreal and what is constant must be real. The absolute Reality is neither a cause nor an effect. It is Parama Karana. Rest in Truth (Vastu—Sat). Remember Truth.

Quarters, time, Chitta; mind, Jiva and Maya do not really exist. The immutable and non-dual Brahman alone exists and shines in its native, pristine glory, without any environment, fluctuation, beginning, middle or end. Feel always: 'Brahman alone exists. Brahman alone is the one Reality. I am Brahman.'

Eveything is Brahman. But Kriya Adwaita is not possible. We can have Bhavana Adwaita only. Kriya Adwaita is possible when one is not doing any work, when he lives in a far off cave, when he has cut off completely from Society. Sri Sankara who peached Kevala Adwaita formed a band of Nagas to attack the Buddhists.

Sri Sankara says: There is something outside. You cannot deny this. But it is mere appearance. It is relative. It has no independent existence. It is mere Vivarta (superimposition). Just as snake is a Vivarta of rope, ring a Vivarta of gold, so also this world, this body, this mind, this Prana, these Indriyas are Vivartas of Brahman. Vivarta Vada is the Vada of Sri Sankara.

Just as the sun is reflected in a pool of water, the Chaitanya of Brahman is reflected in Avidya or mind and Buddhi. Just as the reflection of the sun vanishes when the water in the pool dries up, so also when the Jiva destroys the Avidya, when the lake of Antahkarana dries up through Jnana, the reflection of Chaitanya in the mind vanishes. This is Abhasa Vada or theory of reflection in Vedanta. This is also known as Pratibimba Vada. Abhasa means reflection or shadow (Chhaya). Brahman or Kutastha is the Bimba. Pratibimba is Jiva or child Abhasa (human being). The mirror is Avidya or mind (Antahkarana). This is also termed Bimba Pratibimba Vada.

The Atman is pure, eternal, unchanging, immortal and self-luminous but the body is impure, changing, perishable and insentient. And yet ignorant men identify the two. Can any ignorance be worse than this?

Just as when a pot is broken the pot-ether becomes one with the universal ether, so also when the Upadhis or limiting adjuncts, body, mind are dissolved, the individual Soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul or Brahman.

There is the physical ether. Then there is the Chidakasa or mental space occupied by the mind. Then there is the Chid-akasa or knowledge space. The three are interwoven like warp and woof.

As a stick burning at one end, when waves round, causes an illusion of a circle of fire (Alata Chakra), so it is with the multiplicity of this phenomenal universe. The circle of fire is an illusion. Similarly this relative world is also an illusion. The only reality is Brahman which is constant witnessing subject, which is the support or substratum for this world. The illusion is due to Avidya. When Avidya is destroyed by attaining knowledge of the Self, names and forms will vanish. You will behold the Self only everywhere.

O Man, thou art Divine. Thou art immortal Soul. Thou art King of kings. Shake off the delusion that you are the body. Identify yourself with the all-pervading consciousness, Atma or Brahman. Thy real essential nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Feel this. Realise this.

Cherish no desire in your heart. Have no attachment or fondness for anybody.. Love the Akshara or Imperishable Brahman. Follow the path which is free from duality. Be in the world but be out of it. Separate yourself from body and mind. Identify yourself with the Self. Make no distinction between I and you. Be a Sakshi of the Vrittis or thoughts.. Behold the One in many. Behold the Immortal Self in all beings.

Whenever there is an instrument there is some one to use it. Mind, intellect, etc., are instruments. Therefore there must be one who handles these instruments and guides these.

Just as a house exists for somebody's use, so also the ears, eyes, hands, legs exist for the use of the Director of the ears, eyes, etc., who is entirely distinct from the ears, etc. That Director is the real, infinite 'I'. He is the inner ruler. He is immortal. He is pure consciousness. The capability of the ears to hear sound, of the eyes to cognise objects depends upon the intelligence of this Director. Just as the moon borrows its light from the sun, these senses borrow their light, intelligence and power from the source, viz., Atma, who is the Director. Therefore it is appropriate to say that the Atma is the ear of ears, eye of eyes, Prana of Pranas, mind of minds.

As fire is concealed by ashes, sword by the scabbord, sun by the clouds, lemons or brinjals by the leaves, rubies by the earth, springs by the cushion, mattress by the bed-sheet, so also this Atma is concealed by flesh and bones and objects.

Think and feel that your consciousness is outside your physical form. Then you can become one with the all-consciousness. You will become soon a Sakshi or witness. You will feel that your body is an instrument in your hands. Just as you feel that you are holding a walking stick in your hand, so also you will feel that your body is another walking stick in another hand.

The onlookers enjoy more in a cricket match than the players themselves. The minds of the players are filled with anxiety, with thoughts of success or failure. They cannot have peace of mind. If you remain as a Sakshi of the world and your mind, and if you identify yourself with the Sakshi, you can enjoy the bliss of Atma. You will attain Atma Jnana.

Prarabdha is only Purushartha of the previous births. The Sanchita Karmas (accumulated store-house of Karmas) depend upon Avidya (Avidya Asraya). The Kriyamana Karmas depend upon egoism (Ahankarasraya). The Prarabdha Karmas depend upon the physical body. In a Jivanmukta ignorance is destroyed by the dawn of knowledge. So Sanchita Karmas are destroyed. He has no egoism. So Kriyamana

Karmas (current actions) are also destroyed. From this point of view, he has no body as he identifies himself with the all-pervading Brahman. So the three kinds of Karmas are destroyed when one attains knowledge of the Atman.

Fate or destiny is your own creation brought through your own Karmas. You are the master of your own destiny. Change your mode of thinking. Instead of foolishly thinking 'I am body,' think 'I am Atma.'

You have now the habit of thinking 'I am the body. I am mind. I am Prana. I am Indriya or sense.' Change your present habit of thinking and think 'I am Brahman. I am the all-pervading intelligence.' You will conquer you destiny. If you are in the habit of writing in a slanting manner, you can change your habit and can write in a vertical manner. Even so you can change your habit of thinking. Conquest of habit is a conquest of destiny.

When the serpent of Vipareeta Bhavana (wrong conception that:—"I am the body and the forld is real") hisses in your mind, take the rod of Brahma Bhavana: "I am Brahman" and keep up the unbroken current of thought of Self.

Identification with body (Deha Adhyasa) brings pain. When one attains knowledge of the Self, he will experience no pain although there is some disease in the body. He is above body-consciousness. A highly developed Hatha Yogi only who has control over the atoms and Kaya Siddhi can keep his body without ailment. Rise above body and always identify yourself with painless, diseaseless Atma. You will be free from pain. There is no pain if you are suffering from any disease when you are in deep sleep. There is no pain even if the leg is amputated when you are under chloroform. It is the linking of the mind with the body that causes pain. It the mind is taken away from the body consciously and fixed on the all-blissful Self through constant meditation, you will have no pain even if the body is subject to any kind of ailments. This is Jnana Yoga Sadhana. Prarabdha has to be worked out. Therefore the body will be subjected to disease. The Jivanmukta will not experience any pain. The on-lookers may wrongly imagine that the sage is also suffering. It is a serious mistake. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had cancer of the throat. Buddha had chronic dysentery. Sri Sankara had piles. But they experienced no pain. When the doctors asked Ramakrishna Paramahamsa: "Why do you suffer like this? Can you not undergo the operation?", he replied 'I have given my mind to Mother Kaali. How can I think of body ? How can I bring my mind back into the cage of flesh. I am always in bliss."

2. TEACHINGS OF VEDANTA

Vedanta is that sublime philosophy which teaches that individual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul and removes the illusion of the Jiva. Vedanta is the science of Atma that helps the aspirants to eradicate fear, sorrow, grief, delusion and to realise Self. Vedanta is that magnanimous philosophy which raises the ignorant Jiva to the sublime heights of Brahmanhood. Vedanta is a penacea for all human ailments. Vedanta is a sovereign specific for the disease of birth and death. Mere theorising of Vedantic principles will not do. You should live in the spirit of Vedanta. You should become a practical Vedantin. You should realise this Atma which Vedanta treats of. Then only you will become a liberated sage.

Vedanta wants you to give up Moha for body, wife, children and property. Vedanta wants you to abandon all worldly desires, cravings and longings for worldly objects. Vedanta wants you to eradicate the desire for power, name and fame. Vedanta wants you to break all ties and connections with the world mentally. Vedanta wants you to cut off ruthlessly all worldly attachments by the sword of discrimination.

Some ignorant people only say that Vedanta preaches Immortality, hatred and pessimism. This is a very sad mistake. Vedanta does not preach either immortality or even indifference to mortality. The realisation of Brahman is not possible for the immoral. An aspirant who has ethical perfection and who is endowed with the four means can become a student of Vedanta. How can you expect an aspirant who possesses discrimination, dispassion serenity, self-restraint, forbearance, endurance, faith, one-pointed mind and a burning desire for liberation to lead an immoral life? It is quite absurd. Vedanta wants you to destroy Moha or selfish love and passion for the body and to develop, pure, disinterested cosmic love or the magnanimous divine Prem. It never preaches pessimism but it preaches the pinnacle of optimism. It preaches 'give up this little illusory pleasure. You will get eternal and infinite Bliss. Kill this little 'I'. You will become one with the Infinite. You will become immortal. Give up this illusory world. You will get the vast domain of supreme peace or Kingdom of God." Is this pessimism? Certainly not. It is wonderful optimism.

That man in whom the sex-idea is deep-rooted can never dream of understanding Vedanta and realising Brahman even within one hundred crores of births.

You now identify yourself with the mortal, physical body. You have strong Deha Adhyasa. You have no idea of Atma now. You have no unshakable conviction of its existence also. You are only body now. You are Mr. so and so. Your mind is filled with Vasanas and egoism. You are afraid if death You should realise the Immortal Self through direct cognition. Then only you can know that the Atma is Immortal.

As long as this Self (individual soul or Jiva) is in the Samsara state, as long as the Samsara state does not come to an end, by attaining Atma Jnana or knowledge of the inner Self, so long the connection of the soul with the Buddhi does not cease. When there is connection with the Buddhi, there is connection for the soul with the body also As long as the soul has connection with the Buddhi, its Upadhi or limiting adjunct, so long the Jiva remains as the little Jiva and wanders about in this Samsara in a miserable state with old age, disease and afflictions. In reality, there is no individual soul. It is a fictitious appearance through Bhranti, Bhrama, Adhyasa or Kalpana like the reflection in the mirror or like the blue colour in the sky.

Parinama (finite) thing is always Anitya (non-eternal). Is this not your daily experience in life? Brahman or Atma which is the essence of mind, body and Indriyas is Aparichhinna (infinite), Nitya (eternal). Realise Atma, therefore, by singing OM. All miseries will terminate. You can become a Dattatreya or Shankara.

Conventionality stunts the growth of the intellect. It contracts the heart. Rise above conventional distinctions of mundane life. Abandon the lower nature. Do not be swayed by conventionalism. Assume your true nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Meditate on the Self or Brahman. Dispel the cloud of ignorance by the dawn of Jnana Surya or the Sun of Knowledge. Extricate yourself from the three bodies or the five sheaths. Dwell in the abode of Supreme Peace. Revel in the ocean of boundless Joy, O Ram.

The supreme light of Brahman or the immortal Self will shine in you if you develop the intuitive mind, if you attain knowledge of the Self. You must be conscious of your Atma. Then only you will attain the highest knowledge. The supreme Inner Self is Truth and Knowledge Infinite.

Everybody wishes to be independent. Everybody wants to be a supreme ruler. Everone does not like to be guided by the wishes of others. Everyone wishes others to be guided by and follow his wishes. Everybody in his heart of hearts really desires to rule over all others if only he could. Everybody wishes to have no rival to himself. The real cause is that there is in you the immortal Self effulgent soul or Atma which is the support for the whole universe. In reality you are this Atma. That is the reason why you have such a feeling and a desire. Suzerainship is quite natural to you. Suzerainship is an attribute of Atma. On account of ignorance, you have mistaken the body for Atma and you try to have no rivals in the body, in the business, in office, in College, in games, in dominions and in any field of activity. You can have absolute suzerainty only by realising the Atma. Atma Swarajya only can make you absolutely independent Atma Swarajya only can make you the Supreme Ruler or absolute monarch of the whole universe. Therefore realise this wonderful Atma and become a veritable mighty potentate of the three worlds.

O man, in essence thou art the blessed divinity. Thou art the immortal blissful Self. Why are you attracted towards the physical beauty, the beauty of landscape and flowers when you are yourself the beauty of beauties, the fountain source of all beauties? When you are yourself the eternity, why are you limited by time? Why do you say: 'I am 40 years of age'? Why are you afraid of death? Why do you say: 'time has passed away' when you are the infinite? Why do you say: 'I am fatty. I am 5 ft. 6 inches'? When you are yourself the sun of suns, the light of lights, why do you admire the sun, the moon, the stars and the lightnings? When you are the Emperor of emperors, the source of all wealth, why do you say: 'I have no money. I am very poor. I am penniless.' Why do you beg? When you are the Director and the Governor of the whole world, why do you say: 'I am helpless. I am your most obedient servant?' When you are an embodiment of bliss and peace, why do you say: 'I am miserable. I am restless?'

When you are existence absolute, why are you afraid of death or Lord Yama? When you are omnipotent, why do you say: 'I am weak?' When you are all healthy why do you say: 'I am unwell. I am suffering from chronic disease?' When you are knowledge absolute, why do you say: 'I am ignorant. I know nothing?' Realise the mysterious Sat-Chit-Ananda Atma through purification, concentration, meditation and identification. Rejoice in this wonderful Self and be free. Tat Twam Asi, thou art That, O dear Satyakama bold!

Know and feel always that you are the all-pervading, immortal consciousness, the undying, eternal Atma. This alone can give you real freedom and everlasting bliss. Spread this message to your friends and to those who come in contact with you. You can build a new order. You can give peace and solace to millions.

In the lamp of heart, put the oil of Vairagya. Insert the wick of devotion. Now kindle the light of knowledge by constant meditation and see. Now the darkness of ignorance will be dispelled. You will have stupendous vision of Truth. You will be illumined.

Learn to discriminate. Become dispassionate. Eradicate Vasanas. Discipline the Indriyas. Make the mind one-pointed. Yearn for liberation. Kill egoism. Annihilate Sankalpas or thoughts. Dissolve this world. Remove Avidya. Realise the Brahman. This is the gist of Vedanta.

Cognise Brahman. Annihilate Avidya. Dissolve the world. Destroy duality. Become fearless. Be happy. Rejoice in the Self. Rest in your own Swaroopa. Know That. Merge in That. Become That.

In the day time what gives you light? Sun. At night when there is no sun, what gives you light? Moon, stars and lamps. When there are no sun, moon, stars, what gives you light? Eyes. Which gives you light when the eyes are closed? Buddhi or intellect. Who finds out the defect in the intellect whether there is clarity or turbidity? Aham (I). That Aham is the Light of lights, the Eternal Soul or Atman or the Infinite.

To behold forms is the Dharma of the eyes. The support or substratum for all forms is Brahman. When you look at an object behold Brahman which is the one essence and abandon the form as it is illusory or unreal. Have the same attitude towards the other objects which pertain to the other senses. This is the meaning of the Sloka: '*Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja*—abandon all duties and come to Me alone for shelter'. Gita Chap. XVIII-66.

Viveka (discrimination) is the seed. Vairagya (dispassion) is the root. Guru's Gace is the shower. Brahma Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the fruit. This is the path of Jnana Yoga.

Learn to discriminate between the permanent and the impermanent. Behold the Self in all beings, in all objects. Names and forms are illusory. Therefore sublate them. Feel that there is nothing but the Self. Share what you have, physical, mental, moral or spiritual with all. Serve the Self in all. Feel when you serve others that you are serving your own self. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Melt all illusory differences. Remove all barriers that separate man from man. Mix with all. Embrace all. Destroy the sex-idea and body idea by constantly thinking on the Self or the sexless and bodiless Atma. Fix the mind on the Self when you work. This is practical Vedanta. This is the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads and sages of yore. This is real, eternal life in Atma. Put these things in practice in the daily battle of life. You will shine as a dynamic Yogi or a Jivanmukta. There is no doubt of this.

You must be a practical Vedantin. Mere theorising and lecturing is only intellectual gymnastics and lingual warfare. This will not suffice. If Vedanta is not practical, no theory is of any value. You must put Vedanta in daily practice in every action of yours. Vedanta teaches oneness or unity of Self. You must radiate love to one and all. The spirit of Vedanta must be ingrained in your cells or tissues, veins, nerves and bones. It must become part and parcel of your nature. You must think of unity, speak of unity and act in unity. If you deliver a thrilling lecture on the platform on Vedanta and say: 'I am the all. I am the one Self in all. There is nothing but myself.' and show in action next moment a different attitude of selfishness and separateness, you will not produce any impression in the public. You will be called as a dry Vedantin only. Nobody will care for you.

Adwaita is a fragrance or sweet aroma that emanates from a Vedantin, and is wafted to a long distance. Those who come in contact with a real Vedantin will experience this sweet fragrance. He need not say: 'I am a Vedantin. I practise Vedanta.' If you do not smell this delightful Vedantic Aroma of oneness or equality from a preacher or lecturer on Vedanta know that he is a dry man who prattles something or repeats something like a gramophone. His words will be like empty bullets in the air. They cannot produce any impressions in the minds of the hearers.

3. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

You can imagine that there is nothing but protoplasm in this universe. Then all the forms will vanish. All the forms are constructed out of one kind of matter only. A tree or a man or a dog or a bug or a mosquito is made up of the same kind of matter or protoplasm. A protoplasm is a mould of matter in which life is placed. It is a homogeneous, structureless substance, forming the physical basis of life, endowed with contractility with a chemical composition allied to that of albumen. The thread of matter that connects all forms is one and the same. You can also imagine that there is nothing but energy or mind in this universe. The student in the path of Jnana Yoga thinks that there is only one thread of pure consciousness. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: 'All this is threaded on Me, as rows of pearls on a string' Chap. VII-7.

Behind the names and forms, there is the universal life or hidden Brahman or immanent God. Try to feel the reality underneath the forms. Scorn not at the tiny creatures or the undeveloped beings. The same life that throbs or pulsates in you is throbbing in ants, dogs, elephants and all creatures. Realise your identity and intimate relationship with all creatures. There is only a degree in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman. Look at a tree or a shrub, a dog or a car and endeavour to behold behind the veil of form into the real hidden life or consciousness behind and underneath the form. If you practise like this for some time, you will derive inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop cosmic love and unity of consciousness. This will be the rare magnanimous experience. This will eventually result in the Vedantic realisation of oneness.

Life is common in trees, ants, birds, animals and human beings. What is common in sun, moon, stars, chairs, walls, stones, animals, birds and human beings? Existence. A table exists. A tree exists. Existence is the Sat aspect of the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman.

There is only apparent, fictitious difference in bodies and minds. There are differences in colour and opinions. Atma is the same in all. A thief, a prostitute, a scavenger, a king, a rogue, a saint, a dog, a cat and a rat—all have the same common Atma. Ignore the false appearance and difference. Take out the essence or reality.

Root out the conception of duality by the conception of the absolute unity. Destroy the Bheda Buddhi or the intellect that creates differences, distinctions and separateness. You can now enjoy the eternal bliss of the non-dual Self. You are a Jivanmukta now.

One Atma appears to be many, as one sun appears to be many in various pots of water. Many suns are false. They are mere reflections only. So also the many Jivas are illusory. The one sun alone is real. Even so One Brahman alone is real.

The divine life that throbs in every atom of the universe dwells also in the hearts of human beings. The soul of an ant is the soul of a man. The soul of a sinner is the soul of a saint. The soul of a beggar is the soul of a mighty king. The ultimate Truth in nature is the ultimate Reality in man. To realise the soul through direct intuitive perception is the goal of human life.

Realise that the whole human race is one. Break up ruthlessly all illusory barriers that separate man from man. Understand that the fundamental principles underlying all religions are the same.

Feel your oneness with all. Feel your oneness with the sun, the sky, the wind, flower, tree, buds, animals, stones, rivers and ocean. Realise the oneness of life, unity of consciousness. Behold the one homogeneous Self everywhere in all beings, in all animals, in all plants.

Realise your unity with all human beings, animals, plants and rocks. Mix with all. The Parasees, the Americans, the Italians, the Japanese, the Russians all belong to you. You belong to them. Unite with them.

Realise first your unity with all the members of your family, then with all the members of your community, then with all members of your district, then with all the members of your Province, then the whole nation, then with all the people of the whole world. If you have succeeded in this attempt, then only you can realise your unity or oneness with God.

Sages look with an equal eye in a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, and even in a dog and in an outcaste. What is the nature of this equal vision? Does the elephant appear to them as a dog? Can there be homogeneity in the Gunas or appearances? Gunas are always different and heterogeneous. The sage, harmonised in Yoga,beholds the Self or Atma in the Brahmin, elephant, dog and an outcaste. Everywhere he beholds the same and experiences equal vision. The sage or Yogi beholds equality in everything through the likeness of the Self. Understand this point clearly.

Whatever you see is God. Whatever you hear is God. Whatever you taste is God. Whatever you smell is God. Whatever you feel is God. This is the manifested aspect. The physical body belongs to Virat. The astral body belongs to Hiranyagarbha. The causal body belongs to Ishwara. Where is the little 'I' now?

Have a synthetic cosmic vision. Behold the unity in diversity. Break the barriers or dividing walls through discrimination, enquiry and wisdom. Acquire the spiritual vision of oneness or unity. Soar high in the realm of eternal bliss. Happy is he who has realised the oneness of the Self and who is endowed with the sublime vision of the marvellous Atma.

Feel the divine presence in all creations. Be friendly with all. Love all. Be kind to all. Cultivate universal love. Destroy all barriers that separate man from man. Expand Mix with all. Give up superiority complex. Put a stop to wrong and injustice. Develop a pure conscience. Disseminate knowledge, happiness and peace among men. Practise truthfulness and righteousness.

The child also has equal vision like a sage or a Jivanmukta. He has no idea of friend or enemy. You beat him now and then call him with a piece of sugar-candy in your hand. He will run to you at once with intense joy. In this equal vision there is ignorance. But the equal vision of a sage is due to knowledge of the unity or oneness of the Self.

O nectar's son, behold the one homogeneous Self in all. Mentally repeat the formula of Mantra: 'OM Kka Sat-Chit-Ananda Atma' whenever you perceive any form. Negate the illusory name and form and try to be one with the underlying immortal essence. Serve all with Atma Bhav. Melt all illusory differences. Annihilate separateness. Destroy all unreasonable, dislikes or prejudices. Mix with all. Include all. Embrace all. Share what you have with all. Never remain idle even for a moment. Lead a life of intense activity but keep always calm in mind and thus become a practical Vedantin. Glory to such practical Vedantins. May they radiate Joy, Peace and Love everywhere. May they move about as torch-bearers of Truth, divine light and divine splendour. May they demonstrate a life of practical Vedant by their very exemplary life.

There is neither delusion nor sorrow for that sage who has realised that all beings are the Self, for there is no second for him. Such a sage is verily Brahman Himself. When everything is cognised as Brahman, then there is not even a particle other than Brahman. That is the reason why Srutis emphatically declare 'All indeed is Brahman. There is no such thing as diversity.'

Jiva can become Brahman. But he cannot become Ishwara. As soon as Avidya, the Upadhi of Jiva vanishes, Jiva becomes one with Brahman. (One school of thought).

Water of the Ganges is the same whether it runs in the river's bed or be shut up in a bottle. Even so the Jivatma and Paramatma are one and the same.

He who sees unity in diversity is a real man of religion. The things that make us like are finer and deeper than the things that make us different.

Where there is duality, there one sees another. But when the Atman only is all this, how can one see another? There is fear in duality. There are quarrels and wars in duality.

Duality is ignorance; duality brings grief, sorrow, diseases and death. Transcend duality. Break the veils. Tear the sheaths. Rest in Adwaita now, my dear Mohan.

Do not entertain unkind thoughts. Do not speak unkind words. Pull out all walls that separate you from others. If you see Bheda or difference there is absence of love. Feel your presence in the tree, stone, sun, moon, stars, animals, etc. All is Self. All is One. The whole world is your body. Feel this. Feel your oneness with all life.

I will reiterate again to produce in your mind a deep impression. There is no world. You are not body, you are all-pervading Atma. You are Akarta. You are the silent Sakshi. Indriyas do their Dharmas. There is Atma everywhere. Feel the Indwelling Intelligence. When you see a fruit say: 'This is Ek Atma'. See the essence in all forms Reject the outer sheaths and illusory appearances. This will lead to Bahir Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no necessity for closing the eyes. For this kind of Sadhana, no Asan, no room is needed. This Sadhana is suitable for men of the world who are intelligent. This is work combined with Jnana. The Self light of Para Brahman is appearing as mind and universe. World is nothing but mind. World is a long dream. I have given you the essence of Vedanta or Jnana Yoga in a nut-shell. Digest it. Absorb it. Assimilate it. Proclaim it everywhere boldly. Become fearless. Shine as Brahman. Move about boldly, my dear Jyoti. Rejoice always in Sat-chit-ananda Atma within.

4. GLORY OF VEDANTA

Vedanta is the direct royal road to the domain of unalloyed felicity and the supreme abode of immortality and eternal bliss. It is the Sanjivini (Himalayan herb) that can bring immediate life to a dying man. It lifts a man at once to the status of an Emperor of emperors, King of kings, Shah of Shahs, even though he has nothing to eat, even though he is clad in rags. It gives real inner strength. It inspires, renovates, vivifies, invigorates and energizes. It gives hope to hopeless, power to powerless, vigour to vigourless and joy to the joyless.

The only bold philosophy that elevates a man is Vedanta. It is all-embracing. It is the religion of Vedas. It brings hope, strength, peace, inspiration to the forlorn, depressed and hopeless. How elevating is the study of Vedanta. How still more elevating is the practice of Vedanta. Salutations to the teachers of Vedanta and Brahma Vidya Gurus.

The more dualism grows, the more will increase the fear of earthly existence. How can there be fear when you behold the Self only everywhere, when you attain the non-dual state of unity with Brahman, when there is none to see, none to hear, none to touch?

The sages emphatically declare that there is no greater gain than the gain of Atma, the Self. All desires are gratified when one attains Self-realisation. He enjoys the supreme bliss of the Self. He is satisfied in the Self.

Vedanta embraces all. It is all-inclusive. It is the religion of the Upanishads. It is the property of all. It has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever. It preaches universal principles. It inculcates the idea of that universal religion which is the fountain-head of all religions of the world. It is a great leveller. It unites all. It gives room for all.

Vedanta includes all sects, all religions, all creeds, all cults, all nations. It proclaims the revelations of the sages of yore of India. It is the common property of all. It expands the heart and opens the eyes. It brings a new life. It gives supreme joy and eternal bliss. It removes all barriers which separate man from man and unites all people. It gives solace, strength, peace and removes all fears, doubts and anxieties, delusion and illusion.

The knowledge of the Self destroys Avidya or ignorance, just as the sun destroys darkness. Then the whole world of names and forms which had been hiding Brahman from you will melt away.

The knowledge of Brahman is handed down from Brahma to the rest, from preceptor to disciple (Parampara). Sri Gaudapada handed down to Sri Govindapada the knowledge of the Self, Sri Govindapada to Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Sankaracharya to Sri Padmapada and so on.

There are seven categories in Nyaya philosophy viz.,

Substance (Dravya)
Quality (Guna)
Action (Karma)
Genus (Samanya)
Difference (Visesha)
Co-inherence (Samavaya) and
Non-existence (Abhav).

Pratyaksha (perception of the senses), Anumana (inference), Shabda (Vedic testimony or testimony of an Apta) and Upamana are the four Pramanas (proofs of knowledge) in Nyaya Philosophy.

That which knows is called Pramata; that which produces knowledge of an object is Pramana (proof) and an object or thing knowable is called Prameya.

You cannot rely much on direct perception. Look at the sky. It appears to be a dome. It seems to be blue. This is not real at all. You cannot rely on inference also. Of all Pramanas, Sabda Pramana is the most reliable one, because it is the direct experience of realised souls. It is absolutely infallible. Srutis possess authority as a means of right knowledge of Brahman.

Atma Jnana is a thing for realisation and not for mere talking. It is Anubhava-Jnana. Mere study of Upanishads and Brahma Sutras will not help a man to attain this Knowledge of the Self. Mere lecturing also will not help much. Can a frog in a well understand the depths of an ocean? Can a blind man understand the glory of sun-shine, however much you explain to him through similes and analogies? Can a man who has not tasted sugar-candy understand the taste of sugar-candy, however much you deliver a lecture on the taste of sugar-candy? Atma Jnana has to be felt and experienced by one's own self, through Sravan, Manan and Nididhyasan.

5. PRACTICE OF VEDANTA

The first step to knowledge is constant service of poor, sick persons. The second step is control of the Indriyas. The third is the cultivation of virtues such as humility, endurance, mercy, truthfulness and continence. The fourth is regular meditation. Then you will hear the sweet, inner voice of the soul. Then your third eye of intuition will be opened. You will have illumination.

In Upadesa Sahasri of Sri Sankara you will find 'The Vedanta should be taught to one who has a calm mind, who has controlled the senses, who is free from faults such as passion, etc., obedient, endowed with virtuous sualities, always humble and who is yearning for freedom"-324-26|72.

Students of Vedanta should study daily Kathopanishad. There is a dialogue between Nachiketas and Yama on the subject of Self-realisation or Atma Jnana. It contains six chapters.

Some Vedantic students do not take care of the body. It is a great mistake. They should not have any Moha for the body. Let them hear the conversation that went on between Prahlad and Lord Vishnu: "O immaculate Prahlad. Look after your body. Why do you think of abandoning this, your body at such a premature period as this? So long as you are not haunted by the Sankalpa of attraction and repulsion towards objects, what matters it whether your body exists or not? Now get up from Samadhi. Administer justice in this world with this body of yours in the Jivanmukti state but yet without groaning under the load of Samsara."

The physical Ganges that you see outside with your physical eyes is not the real Ganga. The real Ganga is knowledge of Atma or Siva (Siva Jnana), which confers immortality. The real Ganga is all-pervading like Akasa (ether). A dip in the Ganges in Kartika Purnima on the banks of Gurumukteswar (U.P.) has doubtless great purifying effect. Mere dip alone will not suffice. Dip in the Atmic Ganga with Chitta Shuddhi through Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana is very necessary.

Brahman is not seen because the mind is impure. Those who are pure realise Him in Samadhi by controlling the mind and the senses. Smriti also says: "The Yogins meditate on Him sleepless, with suspended breath, with contented minds, with subdued senses and see Him, the august eternal One."

Understand the true nature of Atman or the Highest Self. He is untouched by Karmas, pain, afflictions and sin. He is one, eternal, bodiless, all-pervading, independent, unchanging, self-luminous, self-existent, self-contained.

Sense-organs, physical body, mind, Pranas, intellect, etc., are the products of Avidya (Nescience). They are Upadhis (limiting adjuncts). Negate them, sublimate or eliminate them through Vedantic doctrine, Neti-Neti (not this, not this). What remains behind, the balance or the residue left is Atman or Brahman only. So repeat Kevaloham 'I am alone' with Bhav and realise the Atmic bliss now only. Start the Sadhana now, my child Sheel.

Inner life is more important. The world is unreal. It is a shadow. It is Indrajala of Maya. It is Swapna (dream). Brahman alone is real. You are Brahman minus Upadhi (mind, body, Indriyas). Tat Twam Asi—Thou art That". I am not tired of repeating again and again these three ideas.

They must enter your cells, blood, nerves and bones. Hammer these three ideas into the minds of those with whom you come in contact. Preach Bhakti and selfless Karma also.

Parvati once asked Lord Siva: "O my Lord, some declare that liberation from the round of births and deaths is attained through Jnana only. Then what is the use of Yoga?" Lord Siva answered: "Victory is gained in a battle by a sword; but what is the use of a sword without a soldier and chivalry?" Therefore Jnana and Yoga are both indispensable requisites. You may ask: 'How is it that many sages who had attained Self-realisation or Atma Jnana did not practise Yoga at all?' The obvious answer is that they had practised Yoga in their previous births.

Sri Sankara said: "The waves belong to the ocean and not the ocean to the waves. Even so I belong to Brahman and not Brahman to me." Though Sri Sankara had the highest Adwaitic realisation, though he was the exponent of Kevala Adwaita Vedanta, yet he did not ignore Bhakti. He was the greatest Bhakta. He has written hymns to Dakshinamurti, hymns to Hari, hymns to Devi, etc., which bespeaks highly about his Bhakti Bhav. He was not a Sushka Vedanti (dry Vedanti).

According to Sri Sankara: "*Swaswaroopanusandhanam Bhaktirityabhidheeyate*—the seeking after one's real nature is called as devotion." He also says: 'Among things conducive to salvation, devotion alone holds the supreme place."

As soons as the Jiva wakes up, he says: 'I enjoyed sound sleep. I do not know anything.' As soon as the mind comes out from its resting place, place of Laya or involution, the Moola Ajnana, the experiences of Prajna are reflected in the mind and the associated Chaitanya.

Remember OM, Soham, Atma. Silence is Atma. Centre is Atma. Rest in the centre and draw peace and strength Aspire and draw.

During inhalation of breath if you find it difficult to repeat SO, you can repeat RA or 'I am' or 'Sivo' or 'O'. During exhalation you can repeat MA, Brahman, Ham, or M. Soham: 'Sah means He, Aham means 'I am'. "He I am." This is the meaning of Soham. I show the identity of Jiva with Brahman.

Dear Prakash, I hope you have not forgotten the source, Atma—Ram, which sheds light and strength to your mind and Indriyas. Will you feel His Presence in your negatives, photo-chemicals and clients? Repeat OM RAM while at work and washing plates in the dark room. This is an easy Sadhana for your Self-realisation.

You may have Darshan of Lord Krishna face to face. You may talk to Him also several times. You may play and eat with Him. But if you want to have final liberation, you must have Atma-Sakshatkara. Nama Dev had Darshan of Lord Krishna several times and yet he was declared to be a half-baked saint by the potter saint Gora-Kumbhar. He had to go to Vishoba Kesar for attaining perfection or Kaivalya.

Worship of God, study of Vedas, service unto preceptor purify the heart and lead to the attainment of eternal bliss.

Worship God or Atma with flowers of Jnana, contentment, peace, joy and equal vision. This will constitute real worship. Offerings of rose, jassamine, sandal paste, incense, sweetmeats and fruits are nothing when compared to the offerings of Jnana, contentment, etc. These are the offerings given by beginners.

You will realise that the Lord whom in ignorance you worship as separate from yourself is not far from you, is not dwelling outside. He is the Self residing in the chambers of your heart. He is the inner Ruler.

Assert: "Nothing exists. Nothing belongs to me. I am the Self in all." This is Vedantic Sadhana. This will lead to cosmic consciousness and Adwaitic Self-realisation of unity and oneness.

Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes the man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you are nearing the goal. You will experience a wonderful calm now. The flower of the soul will be perfectly opened now. Drink the nectar in the deep silence. In that profound silence the mysteries of Atma will be revealed unto you, like an Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects Moha, fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will be light, knowledge, purity and bliss only everywhere.

Not through matted locks, not through fiery lectures and erudition, not through the exhibition of miracles, does one attain perfection or knowledge of the Self. He in whom the two currents, Raga-Dwesha, egoism, lust and anger are destroyed in toto is very happy and he is a Brahmana or liberated soul or Jivanmukta.

The Truth or Brahman cannot be known or realised without thinking. Thinking consists in the enquiry of 'who am I?' What is the nature of the Self? Thinking on Brahman leads to the attainment of immortality or eternal bliss. Therefore engage yourself in the constant thinking on Brahman. "As you think, so you become." If you think on

Brahman, you will become Brahman. To become Brahman is to attain immortality and everlasting peace.

Anusandhana means enquiry, investigation. Anu means after, Sum means effectively, Dhana means giving attention to. Atma Anusandhana is enquiry into the nature of Atma or Supreme Self. It is synonymous term with Vichara.

Right discrimination (Nitya-anitya-vastu-Viveka) between the permanent and the impermanent serves as a machine-gun for the aspirant in the path of Jnana Yoga to blow up the illusory things of the sense universe.

Who am I? What is Brahman? What is this Samsara? What is the goal of life? How to attain the goal? How to attain freedom from births and deaths? What is the Swaroopa of Moksha? Whence? Where? Whither? Thus should the aspirant of liberation ever enquire, seeking to achieve the purpose of life.

Srishti (creation) is of two kinds viz., Jiva Srishti and Ishwara Srishti. 'I'-ness and 'mine-ness' are Jiva Srishti. It is Jiva Srishti that binds a man to this Samsara. Jiva Srishti is also known by the name Manomaya Srishti (mental creation). The five elements are created by the Lord. Ishwara Srishti cannot bind a man. On the contrary it helps him to attain salvation.

Srutis emphatically declare that Brahman or the Eternal is "that which is above the undifferentiated", 'that which is unborn either as cause or effect', 'that from which speech and mind turn back baffled,' 'that which is not this, not that", 'other than both the known and the unknown". He is the real unconditioned Sat. He is the reality of realities (Satyasya Satyam).

The student of Vedanta puts the Neti-Neti doctrine into daily practice. He says: 'I am not this perishable body. I am not this mind. I am not this Prana. I am not the Indriyas." Neti-Neti means not this, not this. This is the path of negation. But he tries to identify himself with the all-pervading Atma or Self. The practice culminates in the attainment of Self-realisation. It leads to the immediate intuition of the all-filling Brahman.

Suppose there are ten rooms in a house. The darkness of the rooms is the same at night. There is only one darkness. If you bring a light to a room, the darkness of that room only in which a light is kept is removed. Even so the Chaitanya is the same in all Jivas. There is only one common consciousness in all beings. If the darkness of ignorance is destroyed in one Jiva, he only attains full illumination or knowledge of the Self. The other Jivas do not become Jivanmuktas or liberated sages when one Jiva attains knowledge of Brahman, because the limiting adjunct or the Antahkarana or the dividing wall is different in each Jiva.

Atman is all-pervading and is indivisible. When one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, smells nothing else, tastes nothing else, feels nothing else, understands nothing else, that is Atma. Atma is above, below, behind, before, to the right and to the left. Atma is the very soul of all beings. The mind takes its rest in Atma in deep sleep. Atma prompts the mind to think. As Atma is the pure all-pervading subtle spirit, it is formless, colourless, attributeless, nameless, bodiless, but It is a mass of bliss and knowledge.

You cannot hear, see, taste, talk, walk, think, feel and know without the aid of consciousness (Chaitanya) that is hidden within this body. A deadbody cannot talk, see or hear because there is no Jiva Chaitanya in it.

You admire the sun, the moon and the stars, the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, the Jasmine, the rose, the Naiagara Falls and the vast ocean. You admire the air-ship, the steamer, the Railway, the Telegraph and the Wireless. But the mind that has its seat in brain is still more wonderful. In the twinkling of an eye it moves from Colombo to London, from Himalayas to Berlin. The greatest wonder is the Immortal Brahman that pervades the whole universe, that illuminates the sun, the moon, the stars and the mind.

Jiva enjoys deep sleep in this nine-gated city of Maya. In this condition there is neither Vritti nor Sankalpa, neither alteration of moods nor play of senses, neither the function of Raga-dwesha currents, nor the operation of intellect. In this state there is no presentation of false or true knowledge.

The experiences of the waking state are reproduced in the dream through Vasanas and Samskaras, with alterations, additions and mysterious combinations. It is the mind that creates all the dream pictures. Mind is the subject. Mind itself is the object. Mind itself assumes the forms of a woman, horse, cart, driver, road, river, city, etc.

This universe contains two dynamic forces viz., good and evil. Good and evil are the twin forces. They are twins born of the same father. They are Dwandwas or pairs of opposites. They have no independent existence. Evil exists to glorify good. This is its *raison d'etre.* Evil is negative good. Evil is the womb for good. Evil is a destructive force. Good is a constructive force. There is neither absolute good nor absolute evil in this universe. Evil has no independent existence apart from good. Wherever there is evil, there is good; wherever there is good, there is evil. You cannot expect absolute good in this relative world. You can find absolute good in Brahman alone. From the viewpoint of the basic Reality which lies at the back of evil and good, evil and good dwindle into an airy nothing. Evil and good are mental creations. Transcend good and evil and reach the abode of Supreme Peace and Immortality. For a Jnani who has knowledge of the Self, there is neither good nor evil.

There is no bad thing in this world. You may say that excreta is a bad thing. I say 'no'. It serves as a manure for vegetable gardens. Now hear the serious complaint from excreta: It says: "O friend, do not blame me. I was only spoiled by contact with your tongue, stomach and intestines. In my previous state I was a sweet orange. I was a delicious Rasagulla. I was Kalmi mango." Good and bad are relative terms only. They are mental creations. Mango is not sweet. It is the imagination that is sweet. Woman is not beautiful. It is the imagination that is beautiful. Excreta is not impure. It is the imagination that is impure. Correct the mind. Think of Atma, the source. Then all is sacred, all is pure, all is good, all beautiful. Transmute evil into good. This is way to bring heaven on earth.

A doctor thinks that the legal profession is good and lucrative. A lawyer imagines that the medical profession is good and lucrative. Both are labouring under a delusion. This is Maya. This is another trick of the mind. Be cautious. Get Vivek.

Desire, pain, like, dislike are the attributes of the mind. Sankhyas or men of knowledge perceive no pain in the Self or whatever arising from bodily trouble. They know that it is Prakriti that does everything and that Atma or the Self is the silent witness. They know fully well that action pertains to the Gunas and think: 'I do nothing at all.'

This Atma is self-existent and self-luminous. He is the ear of the ear, eye of the eye, tongue of the tongue, mind of the mind, life of the life. All the senses, mind and Prana derive their power from Brahman, the source for everything. You cannot hear without Him. You cannot see without Him. You cannot breathe without Him. You cannot think without Him. He is the inner Ruler (Antaryami).

That from which the infinite, all-pervading Atman has assumed through its power of imagination is called mind. Mind creates and destroys. It creates the whole universe by its power of imagination. The chief characteristic of the mind is imagination. It is the creator and enjoyer of all happiness and miseries. It is the cause for bondage and liberation. Mind is all. It is everything. It is your true friend and bad enemy. The lower mind is your enemy. It causes various sorts of attachment. It is filled with various base desires and appetites. The highest mind is a rare friend and benefactor because it imparts true counsels in the way of obtaining the supreme goal of life. The higher mind becomes your guiding Guru. Hear its sweet, small voice and follow its instructions. The voice of the pure mind is the voice of the Lord. It is an infallible voice. In Gita you will find: "A man should uplift himself by his own self, so let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself. The self (the active part of our nature) is the friend of the self, for him who has conquered himself by this self. But to the unconquered self, this self is inimical and behaves like (an external) foe." Chap. VI—5, 6. There is no other vessel in this earth to wave the ocean of Samsara than the mastery of the lower instinctive mind.

How did space manifest in the spaceless Brahman?How did East, West, North and South come into existence? This is also a creation or trick of the mind. If you are tired even a furlong appears to be a mile. If you are vigorous even a mile seems to be a furlong. For a Jivanmukta or seer there is neither time nor space. He beholds the one Brahman which is timeless and spaceless.

He who is a witness to the modifications or Vrittis of the mind, who is before the arising of such modifications, who is in the modifications of the mind is Brahman or the Supreme Self.

Up and down, within and without, high and low, big and small, thin and stout, virtue and vice, good and bad, pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, now and then, here and there are relative terms. These are all mental creations only. Up will become down and down will become up. This stick is small when compared to that big stick. That big stick will become small when compared to another bigger stick. Within will become without and without will become within. What is good at one time is bad at another time. What is good for one man is bad for another man. What is Dharma for one is Adharma for another. What is Dharma at one time is Adharma at another time. Brahman is neither thin nor stout, neither big nor small. In Brahman there is neither within nor without, neither virtue nor vice, neither pleasure nor pain, neither good nor bad. It is a homogeneous essence of bliss and knowledge, where there is no play of mind, where there is neither time nor space, neither east nor west, neither past nor future, neither Thursday nor Friday.

You see your dear brother Mr. Banerjee in front of you. What is it that you call and recognise as Banerjee? Certainly Banerjee is not his hands, feet, head, chest or belly. Even if his hands and legs are amputated, even if he gets leucoderma or white skin, even if his eye balls are removed, you have the same love for him. You will call him by the name Mr. Banerjee. This proves Mr. Banerjee is not the physical body. Physical body is composed of five elements only. It has a beginning and an end. You may now say that Mr. Banerjee consists of thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings and sentiments and that mind is Mr. Banerjee. The thoughts change. Mind changes. Mind is made up of subtle matter. The non-quintuplicated Sattwic portion of Tanmatras or root-elements or subtle elements goes to constitute the mind. Mind is an effect of Avidya or ignorance. It has a beginning and an end. Even if the thoughts and character of Mr. Banerjee change, you hold on to his personality. Therefore he is not even in the thoughts. He is not the mind, the senses and the body. It is He who gives light to the mind and the senses. Real Banerjee is the Immortal Atma who is beyond mind, speech, time, space and causation. Body, mind and senses are his illusory appendages, created by Avidya.

The surface of the lake is compared to the conscious mind. The bottom of the lake is compared to the sub-conscious mind. The objects that come from the bottom of the lake to its surface are compared to the images that come to the surface of the conscious mind from the sub-conscious mind. The Vikshepa Shakti that disturbs the mind is compared to the wind that disturbs the water of the lake. During the waking state, the Vikshepa Shakti, the Sankalpas of the individual and the senses disturb the mind. In deep sleep the mind is at perfect rest.

The mind whirls like an intoxicated bee. Separate the Indriyas from the objects. Get rid of all attractions. Control the Prana. Close the avenues of the body. Just as you can capture an elephant, so also you can capture the mind now. Just as the soldier kills with his sword his foes who rise against him again and again, so also kill all thoughts of objects as they arise again and again. When all Vrittis die, you will get the stage of mental darkness. Remove this darkness through disicrimination. Then you will get radiant light. Get over this stage. You will have to pass a region of void. Then you will have to cross sleep and Moha. Finally you will enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

The eye does not go there, nor speech, nor mind. The sun does not shine there. The fire does not burn there. The wind does not blow there.

That eternal, supreme being cannot be seen by the physical eyes nor seized by the hands, who has neither ears, nor eyes, who has neither mouth nor nose, who is without bone, flesh and blood, who is neither coarse nor smooth, who is beginningless, endless, timeless, spaceless, who is the substratum for this world, who is the womb for the Vedas, who is the Lord of lords is Para Brahman. May He endow us with clear intellect and vision of unity.

The destruction of Vasanas (Vasana Kshaya) produces destruction of the mind (Manonasa). When the mind is annihilated all residual impressions (Samskaras) are also destroyed. Then one attains Jivanmukti or the final release.

There are two lips but the speech is one. There are two feet but movement is one. There are two eyes but the presiding deity is one. There are two kinds of matter, gross and subtle, but the soul is one. There are two Prakritis viz., Apara Prakriti (inferior) and Para Prakriti (higher), but Para Brahman is one. There are two kinds of mind viz., the higher mind (Shuddha Manas) and the lower mind (Ashuddha Manas) but the underlying spirit is one. There are two kinds of Purushas, Kshara Akshara (Perishable and Imperishable) but Purushottama (Supreme Purusha) is one.

What is your experience in deep sleep? You alone exist. There is no second being. What is your experience during copulation? Two have become one. Intimate friends have one heart, one mind, one soul, though they have different bodies. One alone is the solid reality. One appears as many through the jugglery of Maya or Avidya. Many are illusory like snake in the rope.

The whole experience consisting of perceiver and the perceived is merely an imagination of the mind. That which exists only in imagination does not exist in absolute reality. Duality consisting of subject and object is a creation of the mind and the external sense.

The Jiva is screened by the veil of ignorance. It is this veil that makes him feel the false duality, that he is different from the Supreme Self. This Avarana or veil has to be cut through before attaining the state of oneness with Brah-

man. Cut this knot of Avidya through the sword of knowledge of the Self, soar high in the realms of eternal bliss and roar in your pristine glory the song of Vedanta: "OM Aham Brahma Asmi, Sivoham, Soham, Sat-chit-ananda Swaroopoham".

6. MEDITATION IN VEDANTA

Brahma Nishtha is devotion to Brahman. It is getting oneself established in Brahman. It consists in steadily devoting oneself to Brahman giving up all external activities and directing the whole thought to Brahman, to the exclusion of all else.

What is Jnana? Abheda Darshanam is Jnana. Direct realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the supreme soul is Jnana. What is Dhyana? *Dhyanam Nirvishayam manah*—Meditation is that state in which the mind is freed from the thinking of the sensual objects.

Brahman is the only living Reality. He is your own innermost Self or Atman. He exists in the past, present and future. He is self-luminous, self-existent. He is existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. He is the substratum or support for this world. He is immortal, all-pervading, indivisible, eternal, birthless, changeless and deathless, timeless, spaceless. Purify your heart. Realise this Brahman through meditation and attain freedom, immortality and bliss.

How can you know the knower? The knower remains always as the subject or Sakshi. You can know the external objects. You will have to realise the Self or the knower by intense meditation, through intuition.

To know Brahman or the infinite is to be one with Him. To know Brahman is to become Brahman. To know Him is life Eternal. Therefore know Him through reflection and meditation.

This immortal Atman cannot be attained without constant practice. Therefore he who wishes to attain immortality and freedom should meditate on the Self for a long time.

If you taste any portion of the mountain of salt, you will experience bliss if you taste Brahman, the mountain of Sat-Chit-Ananda with the help of the pure mind during deep meditation.

Behold this magnificent inner Kartigai Deepam deep during meditation and rest in peace, O dear Mallika. Become That spiritual Flame yourself. Identify yourself with that resplendent Atma. Thou art the Sun of suns, the light of lights. Thou art the light of the world. Feel this. Realise this. O self-luminous Arjun.

Through the medium of radio waves, you can hear at Delhi the songs that are sung at Constantinople, Calcutta, Bombay, London,' Berlin. This is broadcasting. There is unity through radio waves in the physical plane. You can feel the unity of Atma through Vedantic Nididhyasan or Ahamgra Upasana.

Once the disciple Baskali approached his Guru and asked him where that eternal, the supreme infinite, the Brahman of the Upanishads is. He spoke not a word. The disciple again asked him and asked again and again, but the master did not open his mouth. He was silent. At last the teacher said: "I have been telling you again and again, but you do not understand me. What am I to do? That Brahman, the Infinite is deep silence."

If you think even once for a second of the all-pervading, pure, immortal Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman or Brahman, this tantamounts to taking thousand and eight dips in the sacred Triveni—the juncture of Jumna. Ganges and Saraswati at

Prayag. This is the real mental sacred bath. Physical bath is nothing when compared to this internal bath of wisdom or knowledge. Soar high always in the realms of higher spiritual knowledge.

A sage teaches through silence. Silence is the most inspired sermon. Silence is the most powerful language. It is the language of the heart. Lord Dakshinamurthy taught the young Kumaras (Sanak, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumar) Brahma Vidya through silence.

The real solitary place is Brahman who is one without a second. There is neither sound nor colour here. There is no disturbance of any sort here. The only companion for you in the beginning of your practice is Brahman. When you become that during deep meditation, you are left alone (Sivah Kevaloham).

Rigorous self-discipline and regular meditation will help you to fix your mind completely on the Eternal.

The bubble bursts and becomes one with the ocean. When the body bursts, when the mind melts, the Jivatma becomes one with the Brahman. The following formulae will help you very much in Nirakara meditation:

"I am the ocean of Sat-chit-ananda OM OM OM
"I am the ocean of Light OM OM OM"

Remember the above illustration also.

Students of Vedanta should salute as soon as they sit on Asan for meditation the Brahma Vidya Gurus viz., Brahma, Vasishtha, Shakti, Parasara, Vyasa, Suka, Sankara, Sureshwaracharya, Padmapada, Trotaka, Dattatreya, Dakshinamurthy, Sri Krishna and others. This will remove their sins and obstacles. They will be able to understand clearly the real meaning of Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and other Vedantic literature, if they remember them before they start their study.

You can select any of the four 'Word-images' Sat, Chit, Ananda or Jyoti for Nirguna meditation. The 'word-image' will drop by itself when you are established in the Brahmic feeling or consciousness. The word images are helpful for beginners in the practice of Nirguna meditation.

That which remains after resolving back the senses, mind, intellect, the objects and the five elements, is Chinmatra or pure consciousness. This is also Chidananda. This Chinmatra alone always exists. This is Sat. Meditate upon this pure consciousness and attain freedom.

"Know that to be indestructible by Whom all this is pervaded, nor can any work the destruction of that Imperishable One". Gita Chap. II—17. 'Avinasi' means indestructible. Atman is Avinasi. This Sloka bespeaks of the immortality of the soul. Meditation on the significance of this Sloka will assuredly lead to Self-realisation. Meditation on the meaning of this verse is Atma-chintan. Meditation on the word 'Avinasi' will infuse much courage and develop will-power. Constantly repeat this word mentally. Whenever fear overpowers you, repeat the formula 'Avinasi Atma I am —OM OM.'

In the Highest Self or Sat-Chit-Ananda Parabrahman, there is neither sunshine nor sunset; there is neither day nor night; there is neither unity nor duality; there is neither Being nor non-being. Here all speech ends in silence, subject and object become one. Here there is neither witness nor the thing witnessed. Here that consciousness which is expressed 'Soham', 'I am He' is lost. When the seer and the objects of sight are lost, who can there be to say what is or what is not?

Taste the imortal sweetness of the beautiful life in the Self within. Live in Atma and attain the blessed immortal state. Meditate and reach the deeper depths of eternal life, the higher heights of divine glory and eventually attain the full glory of union with the supreme Self. Now your long wearisome journey terminates. You have reached your destination, your sweet original home of everlasting peace, the Param Dhama.

A student in the path of Vedanta ignores the sounds and lights and visions during meditation. He meditates on the significance of the Mantra of the Upanishad by negating all forms and visibles. 'The sun does not shine there, nor do the moon and the stars, nor does this lightning shine and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His Light, all these shine.

He meditates also like this: "The air does not blow there. The fire does not burn there. There is neither sound nor touch, neither smell nor colour, neither taste, there is neither mind nor Prana in the homogeneous essence."

"Asabda, Asparsa, Arupa, Agandha,
Aprana, Amana, Ateendriya, Adrishya,
Chidananda Rupah Sivoham, Sivoham.
I am the blissful Siva. I am the blissful Siva."

Happy is he who attains the blissful Turiya state or the state of super-consciousness. Blessed is he who rests in his own Sat-chit-ananda Swaroop. Peaceful is he who attains the final beatitude of life. Joyful is he who reaches the immaculate seat of Brahman, the immortal abode of sages and Rishis.

There are three main stages in the path of Jnana (1) the Sadhana stage; (2) Glimpses, Alpam, and (3) Sahaja Avastha or native stage in which one is firmly established in the Brahmic consciousness or his own Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroop. Do not stop the Sadhan when you get glimpses, alpam. Continue it till you are established in Sahaja Avastha, Bhuma.

Now try to continue the Akhanda Brahmic feeling. Soar high. Keep that state as long as you can. Get established in That. Have Sahaja Avastha always. This must be your aim and endeavour now. You have sufficiently advanced in your spiritual practice during the last six months.

Forget the body, forget the world. Forget friends and relatives. Forget everything. Meditate on the eternal, unchanging self-luminous principle in you. Be established in that and that only. Merge in that only, You are a Jivanmukta or Bhagwata now.

Brahman is beyond the reach of senses, but the aspirant gets direct perception of Brahman through Brahmakara Vritti generated by meditation on the Mahavakya or great sentences of the Upanishads such as "Aham Brahma Asmi—I am Brahman", "Tat Twam Asi—Thou art That".

Realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul eradicates totally the miseries born of relative existence and removes the veil of ignorance in a Jiva.

This realisation can come by meditation on the right significance of the "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya.

Just as mother, in order to pacify her child that is weeping places before it a plantain fruit or a biscuit or a sweetmeat, so also the spiritual preceptor pacifies those who are weeping in the Samsara on account of the three kinds of fever by placing before them the most delicious and valuable spiritual food viz., the Mahavakyas which proclaim about the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. They say, "My beloved children, weep no more. You are in essence the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. Give up identification with this perishable body. 'Tat Twam Asi—Thou art That'. Realise the Self and rejoice."

Understand the right significance of 'Tat Twam Asi'. The knowledge relating to the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul that arises from the great sentences is the means to emancipation.

Realise that 'I am Brahman' and 'the Brahman is myself'. Merge the soul in that pure, non-dual supreme Soul and enjoy the final beatitude of life. Now you will neither realise the existence of your body of life. Now you behold the world as separate from Brahman or Atma.

He Saumya, sing OM, OM, OM. Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham. Be bold. Be cheerful always. Come out of this cage of flesh. Thou art not the perishable body. Thou art the immortal Soul, Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. Thou art sexless Atman. Thou art the son of a King of kings, of an Emperor of emperors—Brahman of the Upanishads, the Indweller of your heart and the silent witnes of your mind. Act as such.

Feel as such. Claim your birthright, not from to-morrow or the day-after, but right now from this very second. Tat Twam Asi—Thou art That, O Niranjan bold.

Tat Twam Asi—Thou art Immortal—Thou art Brahman. Be firm on this point and stick to this conviction even when you are at the point of bayonet or at the mouth of a cannon. This Atman is indestructible. Thou art Atman !

[illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible] Ask [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] connection room which you see at the [illegible] of a channel. This [illegible] is [illegible]

Chapter Twelve

JNANA YOGA

1. WHAT IS BRAHMAN?

Brahman or the supreme Self is beyond space, time and causation. He is limitless. He is tranquil. He shines with equal effulgence in all bodies. He cannot be any particular thing. He is Chaitanya or pure consciousness. He is Vastu. Atma or Brahman or the Supreme Self is the hidden treasure. It is the jewel of jewels. It is gem of gems. It is the imperishable, inexhaustible supreme wealth, which no dacoit can rob. It is Chintamani of Chintamanis that will give man whatever he wishes.

Who Himself sees all, Whom no one beholds, Who illumines the intellect etc., but Whom they cannot illumine—that is Brahman. That is Atma.

The self-shining pure being, who is the support of this universe, who is consciousness itself, who is Bliss Absolute, who is changeless is Brahman.

A supreme principle exists. It is Atma. It is Para Brahman. It is imperishable, unborn, undecaying and undying. It is ancient. It is one. It is a mass of wisdom and bliss.

Brahman is the biggest ocean of Satchidananda. Brahman is surrounded by an ocean of mind, an ocean of Prana and an ocean of ether and Tanmatras.

That unheard hearer, that unseen seer, that unthought thinker, that unknown knower is Brahman.

That unborn, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless (Ajam, Ajaram, Amritam, Abhayam) essence is Brahman.

That from which this world has come out, That in which this world exists, That in which it gets dissolved is Brahman.

Atman is eternal (Nitya). It is unchanging (Nirvikara). It is one mass of knowledge (Prajnana Ghana, Chidghana, Vijnanaghana). It is imperishable (Akshara).

Atman or the pure spirit is timeless, spaceless, placeless and endless. It is full of Jnana (Jnana Maya). It is Santa and self-luminous (Swayam Jyoti). It is Jyotirmaya (full of light). All students of Vedanta seek this Atman to get Brahmanubhava. It is called Param Vastu (supreme thing). It gives immortality.

That in which there is neither East nor West, neither light nor darkness, neither pleasure nor pain, neither hunger nor thirst, neither Harsha nor Soka, neither gain nor loss is Brahman.

Atman is Niravayava (without limbs, without hands and feet). So He is Akarta (Akriya, Nishkriya). How can you attribute agency to Niravayava Atman?

The Atman has no body. It is Atanu, Nirakara. How can there be then Jara (old age) and death for Atman? Atman is Ajara, Amara, Avinasi (undecaying, immortal and indestructible).

The Soul (Atman) is not a product like mind, body or sugar-candy. Eternal intelligence constitutes its very nature. The individual soul is identical with the Highest Self (Brahman).

Atman (Highest Self) is always the witnessing subject in all cognition, because it is infinite and self-luminous. It is not manifested either by itself or by anything else. It is known or revealed through direct perception or immediate, intuitional knowlege, Aparokshatvat.

The intellect can conceive of Brahman as Satchidānanda, That is the reason why these attributes are ascribed to Him. But Brahman is different from Satchidananda also. This does not mean that Brahman is a non-entity or zero, a negative concept or metaphysical abstraction. He is the only Reality or living Truth. He is Being. He is essence.

Mind always runs after pleasure because it is born of Ananda (Brahman). You love a mango because it affords you pleasure. Amongst all things, you love your own Self most. This love of the Self gives the clue to the fact that Ananda or bliss must be the nature of the Self.

That secondless Supreme Being who resides in the chambers of your hearts as Antaryamin or Inner Ruler or controller or Sutradhara or Sakshi (silent witness), Antaratma (inner Self) who has no beginning, middle or end, who is the source for this world, Vedas, body, mind, Indriyas and Pranas, who is All-pervading, who is unchanging, who is the One homogeneous Essence (Ekarasa), who exists in the past, present and future, who is Self-existent Swayambhu, who is Swatantra (independent) and who is self-luminous (Swayam Jyoti) is God or Atman or Brahman or Purusha or Chaitanya or Purushottama.

Atma is different from the knowable. He is beyond the unknowable also. He is incomprehensible. This does not mean that he is a non-entity or void or a negative concept or a metaphysical abstraction. He is a mass of knowledge or pure consciousness. Consciousness is more dense than stone or platinum or gold. He is the only real, living entity, the substratum for everything.

Atma is the immortal substance or essence in man. Atma is the origin of thoughts, desires, reasonings. Atma is spiritual because it is beyond matter and mind. It must be immortal, because it is beyond time, space and causation, it is beginningless, endless and causeless and infinite.

Soul or supreme Self or Atma or Brahman is that abiding, constantly existing and imperishable entity which is the basis for this world, which is indivisible self-luminous, unchanging and all-pervading, which is the silent witness or Shakti of the three states viz., waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The knower of this soul or Atma attains immortality and enters the abode of bliss and nectar.

Brahman is known also by the names Atman or Purusha. Purusha is so-called because of His lying in the body, or because He is full in Himself, or because all that we see is pervaded by Him.

Atman or the Self is the ultimate Reality. It is the ultimate philosophical principle. It is the substratum for everything. It is the only living Truth. It is the Brahman of the Upanishads. It is the support of this world. It is the prop of this body and Prana. It is the Impersonal, Absolute.

Brahman or Atma or the supreme Self is Self-luminous. Brahman cannot be manifested by anything else. Brahman manifests everything. The doctrine of self-luminosity is one of the foundational tenets on which the entire edifice of Vedanta is constructed. Atma gives light to the sun, the moon, the stars, the lightning, the fire, the intellect and the senses. By the light of Atma all these shine but they cannot illumine Atma.

Atma alone exists. It appears as the objects which we cognise just as a rope appears as a serpent. Atma puts on the appearance of these phenomenal objects. It shines by itself. It is self-luminous. All the objects shine after them i.e., they borrow their light from the self-effulgent Atma.

Brahman is the soul or Atma of man. He is the soul of the Universe. Brahman alone is the Infinite. There cannot be two infinities. If there are two infinities, there will be fighting among the infinities themselves. One Infinite will be creating something, another Infinite will be destroying something. There can be only one Infinite. This Atma is the one Infinite Brahman. Everything else is its manifestation or expression.

Brahman is unborn, undying, changeless, bodiless, immortal and fearless. He has neither name nor form. He has neither contraction nor expansion, neither beauty nor ugliness. Verily Brahman is fearlessness. He who knows Brahman becomes immortal and fearless.

Look within. Within is the fountain of bliss. That is the real life. What is the real 'I'. That is soul. That is Atma. That is Brahman. That is pure consciousness.

2. NATURE OF BRAHMAN

Ananta, Nirakara, Nirguna, Nirvisesha, Adrishta are His negative attributes. Satchidananda, Satyam, Santam, Jnanam are His direct, positive attributes.

This is a description of the nature of Atman in Isavasya Upanishad "Atman pervades all, is resplendent, bodiless, scatheless, having no muscles, pure, untouched by sin; far-seeing, omniscient, transcendent, self-sprung; he duly allotted to the various eternal creatures their respective functions." Mantra 8.

Objects with forms only have origin and destruction (Utpatti and Nasa). It is absurd to say that Chaitanya or Brahman without form has origin and destruction. He is Nirakara (formless). It is pure consciousness.

You may ask any boy the following questions. He will give answers that explain the true nature of the Imperishable Self. "Oh boy, what is your name?" "My name is Ram." "Does this name belong to your body or your self?" Ram replies, "This name belongs to my body." "Whose is this cap?" Ram says, "It is mine." "If this cap is destroyed will you also perish?" Ram replies, "No." If your body is destroyed will you also perish? Ram says: "No. Self or Atman is immortal."

"Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahman—Truth, knowledge, Infinite is Brahman." (Tait. Upanishad II-1). This is very often quoted by Vedantins during discussion.

Himalayas, ocean, expansive sky and the sun are the four representatives on earth of the infinite, unmanifested, hidden Brahman.

Srutis emphatically declare about the nature of Brahman. "Akasavat Sarvagata Nitya"—"like the ether, He is omnipresent, eternal." Akasa and the ocean are the two objects in this world which can be compared to Brahman in a way with reference to His infinite nature, Akasa is subtle, all-pervading and without any support. Brahman, also is subtle, all-pervading and without any support (Niralamba). Hence the comparison between the Akasa and Brahman.

Smile, laughter, singing, dancing, are expressions of one's joyful condition. They give the clue that you are in essence an embodiment of bliss. They indicate that bliss is an attribute of the soul. They denote that Brahman is an embodiment of Ananda (Anandaghana).

Brahman is a mass of intelligence—(Chidghana, Vijnanaghana, Prajnanaghana). He is destitute of any other characteristics. He is entirely without any sort of difference. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Ch. IV. 13, you will find "As a mass of salt has neither inside nor outside, but is entirely a mass of taste, thus indeed has that Self neither inside nor outside, but is altogether a mass of knowledge." Just as a lump of salt has inside as well as outside one and the same saltish taste, not any other taste, so also that Brahman has inside as well as outside one and the same intelligence. Inside and outside are mental creation only. When the mind melts in the silence, ideas of inside and outside vanish. The sage cognises one illimitable, homogeneous mass of consciousness only.

The reflected image of the Sun expands when the surface of the water expands; it contracts when the water shrinks;

it shakes when the water is agitated; it gets divided when the water is divided. It participates in all the qualities and conditoins of the water, while the real sun is unchanging throughout. Even so Brahman although never changing participates, as it were, in the attributes and conditions of the body and the other Upadhis or limiting adjuncts or vehicles within which He dwells, He grows with them, as it were, and so on, but not in reality.

Brahman is destitute of all duality. He is without exterior or interior. He is one homogeneous, indivisible, immortal essence. He is free from the three states viz., Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti. He is neither round nor pointed. He is neither short nor tall, neither thick nor thin.

Brahman is subtler than the subtlest. He is beyond good and evil. He is tranquil, eternal, and immutable. He is free from motion and inertia. He is free as the space. He is immaculate and absolute. He is beyond existence and nonexistence.

Brahman is replete with Peace inherent in Himself. He is devoid of death. Death means departure of the vital breath from the body. This is possible only in the case of the Jiva who is associated with the vital air, not in the case of the Paramatman, who is not associated with the vital air. The Sruti says, "Brahman is without Prana, without mind, pure."

Atman has no connection with Karma. He is not an Anga or-Karma. Atman is not an effect or product or modification. He is neither a thing to be attained nor a thing to be refined. He is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. He is always the silent witness or Sakshi.

The eye cannot perceive Him. The mind cannot reach Him. The gross worldly intellect cannot grasp Him. The speech cannot describe Him. The speech returns back along with the mind, as it is not able to describe Him in adequate terms. Sages declare, "We are baffled in our efforts to describe Him. His glory is indescribable. To describe Him is to deny Him." How can a finite mind grasp the infinite? But He can be directly realised by that aspirant who is equipped with the four means of salvation, who does constant meditation, who has sharp, subtle and pure intellect.

3. VEDANTIC LORE

The Infinite is Bliss. The infinite only is Bliss. The Infinite is Brahman or Atman or the Supreme Self. The Infinite is the Absolute. The Infinite is Bhuma or the unconditioned that is beyond time, space and causation. The infinite is immortality. Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else there is Infinity. The Infinite abides in its own greatness. The infinite is Supreme Peace, The Infinite is fearlessness. The Infinite is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. The Infinite is all-full and indivisible. The Infinite is self-existent, self-contained and self-luminous. The Infinite alone is Real. The Infinite alone exists in the three periods of time. You must search, understand, and realise the Infinite.

Whatever you see is Bhava Padartha. Padartha is a thing. That which exists is Bhava. When you say, "It is very very big. It is very very sweet. London is a very big city," this 'very' indicates "Abhava Padartha." It cannot be conceived even by the mind. Brahman or the Absolute comes under the category of "Abhava Padartha" because it is infinite.

As there is no language to describe Brahman or the Self to aspirants, sages generally compare the quietude of the various states previously described, to Brahman, just as Akasa is compared to Brahman. They take examples from the worldly experiences to explain the nature of Brahman to the aspirants.

Brahman is Satchidananda. Brahman is self-luminous. Brahman is changeless and deathless. Brahman is not simply this, but something far higher and far different. It is something transcendental. Vedantins put it as "Vastu". Brahman cannot be defined. The above is only a provisional definition. Because we experience Asat, Jada, Duhkha (unreality, insentience and pain) in this universe, we give the opposite attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda to Brahman. This is Atadvyavritti Lakshana in Vedanta.

Srutis declare "Brahman is indeed below. Brahman is above. Brahman is in front. Brahman is behind." "Brahman is all this" "He who knows this Brahman attains Immortality." "The knower of the Self crosses over grief."

Here is a conversation between Yagnavalkya and Sakalya:—"Which deity art thou in the eastern quarter?" "The Sun". "Where is the Sun located?" In the eyes. "Where has the eye its locality?" "In colours." He said, "In the heart"; for colours are produced by the heart; the heart (the Supreme Self) therefore is the locality of colours."

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II-4. 13 you will find, "Then by what should he see whom?" This clearly indicates that Atman is not an object of perception. It is always the knowing subject. There is neither an agent nor an object of action, nor an instrument. In the physical plane only there is the Triputi or the triad, viz., seer, sight and seen. Who can know the knower? How should one know Him by whom He knows all this? You could not see the seer of sight; you could not hear the hearer of the hearing; you could not perceive the perceiver of perception; you could not know the knower of knowledge.

There are six Padarthas or categories in Vaiseshik philosophy. They are Dravya, (substance), Guna (quality), Karma (activity), Samanya (genus), Visesha (difference) and Samavaya (intimate relation).

The Antahkarana is made of subtle matter. The subtle elements or rudiments of matter, viz., the Tanmatras go to constitute the mind. The mind is formed out of the Vayu Tammatra and 'so it is wandering like air. The intellect is formed out of the five Tanmatras. Chitta is constituted out of the water-Tanmatra. Ahankar is formed out of the earth Tanmatra. Ullam is made of the Akasa Tanmatra.

Indra killed many Sannyasins who were ignorant. Their killing does not affect him at all. He had the fire of knowledge, to destroy the Karmas. He knew he was Akarta, Abhokta, Asanga (non-doer, non-enjoyer and unattached). Raja Janaka put many learned persons in jail, when they were unable to answer his question on Brahma Vidya. He was not in the least affected. He was a Jnani. That is the reason why Gita says: "He who is free from the egoistic notions, whose reason is not affected, though he slays these people, he slayeth not, nor is bound."

Everybody has got a world of his own. The monkey or the dog has got its own world. A deaf man, a blind man, a mad man, a savage, a fashionable man, a child, an aspirant, a rogue, a thief, a king and a peasant—all have their own respective worlds.

'Trial or luck' 'Purushartha or Prarabdha' 'Free will versus Necessity', 'Tagdheer, or Tagdhill' are synonymous.

· The man who is bitten by the serpent of ignorance will be cured by the Garuda-mantra called Jnana, or knowledge of Brahman.

The real 'I' is the eternal soul. The real 'I' is destitute of change, whereas the body is constantly changing. The body is full of impurities. How can then the body be the ever pure Atman?

Just hear this wonderful story. Having bathed in the waters of the mirage, crowned with a garland of sky flowers, this son of a barren woman is going, armed with a bow made of hare's horn. How true it is! This world also is as real as this story.

There is neither absolute good work nor absolute bad work, Gita says, "All undertakings indeed are clouded by defects as fire by smoke". Chapter XVIII—48.

Aham is of two kinds viz., Samashti Aham or collective egoism and Vyashti Aham or individual egoism. The collective egoism is Ishwar and the individual egoism is the Jiva or the human being. The Jiva develops egoism first—begins to feel 'Aham Jiva—I am Jiva' and then only he begins to cognise the world and the Ishwar. But for the Vyashti Aham, there cannot be any Samashti Aham or Ishwar and the world.

As soon as you realise that you are not this body you become free from matter and death, you are free from the bondage of Karma, from the fetters of desires, from the mirage of this mundane life and its concomitant evils and miseries.

You see a water-fall. The water flows continuously. If you take a photograph, you see the water-fall in the picture, but there is no motion in the water in the picture. Motion is mental creation. It is a trick of the mind and the eye. Motion is a relative term. The object appears to move only.

Motion is illusion. Behind the objects that move there is the absolutely motionless Atman or Brahman. Where can this Brahman move, when He is all-pervading, and Infinite? Sitting He goes far. Lying He is everywhere, because He is all-pervading and infinite.

Ten ignorant people crossed a river by swimming and reached the other shore safely. They began to count themselves to see whether all have reached the shore. One man counted all the nine persons and forgot to count himself, the tenth person and began to weep bitterly. He thought that one man has been drowned. The other nine persons also counted in the same manner each man forgetting to count himself and began to weep when the tenth man was missing. When one man wept, all the nine persons joined with him in weeping. A bystander who was noticing their folly pointed out, "O man, no one is missing. There are ten men here. Tenth man is yourself. You have failed to count yourself." They were all immensely pleased afterwards.

Just as the man fails to see though near the existence of himself, which completes the required number, when his mind is engrossed in counting the persons external to himself, so also the Jiva on account of his ignorance is quite oblivious of his being in reality one with Brahman. Thus Brahman though is Atman itself, He is not attained on account of ignorance. But when he is taught by the Srutis and the preceptor he beholds the Brahman, the Atman of all, to be his own Atman or the Self, just as a man, who owing to ignorance misses himself making up the required number and who reminded by some one else, finds himself again by knowledge.

4. VEDANTA AND OTHER SCHOOLS

According to Sankhya philosophy there is no Prana Tattva. Prana is combined function of all organs.

Proposition, reasoning, example, application, conclusion are the five Avayavas or members of a syllogism in Nyaya philosophy (Indian logic of Goutama Rishi).

There are three Vadas or doctrines viz., Parinama Vada of Sankhya Philosophers, e.g., like milk changing into curd, Vivarta Vada of Sri Sankaracharya, e.g. snake in the rope, and Ajati Vada, the theory of non-evolution of the universe of Sri Gaudapada. The first Vada is the lowest. Vivarta is in the middle. Ajati Vada is the highest.

Dravya (substance), Guna (attribute), Karma (action), Samanya (severality), Visesha (particularly) and Samavaya (co-inherence) are the six categories of Vaisheshika philosophy of Kanada Rishi.

There are no Pranas in Sankhya system. There is no Chitta also. That is the difference. Vedanta is only amplification and fulfilment of Sankhya. There are many Purushas in Sankhya, whereas there is only one infinite (Akhanda) indivisible Atma in Vedanta.

In some states, the Prime Minister is all-in-all. He can do and undo things. The Maharaja is in name only. Even so, the Purusha of Sankhyas is a nominal head only. His presence only is necessary. Prakriti is all-in-all. She does the whole creation.

By the attributes, Sat-Chit-Ananda, you really understand that there is no Asat or untruth, Avidya or ignorance, Duhkha or pain in Brahman. The opposite attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda cannot be found in Brahman. Similarly the attributes Ananta, Amritam indicate that the opposites Anta (end), Mrityu (death) cannot be found in Brahman. This is known as Vyavritti in Vedanta.

Satta-Samanya is another name for Nirguna Brahman. Tureeyateeta is that state in which the individual soul merges himself in Para Brahman and becomes identical with the highest Self.

How can there be Parinama (modification) in Brahman? Brahman means the Great or Infinity or Absolute. Milk becomes curd. This is Parinama. There can be Parinama only in Saavayava substance. Saavayava means "with members" like the body of a man with hands, legs, feet, etc. Brahman is Niravayava (without parts or members). There cannot be any Parinama in Brahman. Understand this point well. You will be saved from many mental torments, anxieties and worries.

The Kalyana Gunas of the Savishesha Brahman of Sri Ramanuja are only an Amsa of the Ananta Gunas or Nirvisesha Brahman of Sri Sankara. By Nirguna it does not mean that the Suddha Brahman or Para Brahman is totally bereft of Gunas. It means that Nirguna Brahman is the storehouse. Some followers of Sri Ramanuja out of ignorance and spite pass a remark: "Sri Sankara's Nirguna Brahman is a mass of stone, a void. He is quite dry. There is no Rasa in such a Nirguna Brahman." This is ignorance only. Sri Sankara's Nirguna Brahman is 'Raso Vaisaha-Anando vai saha', full of Rasa and Ananda. He is not all-knowing. He is knowledge itself. He is not all-beautiful. He is Beauty itself. This is Swarup. This is essence. He is an embodiment of all Rasas.

5. TATTWAS

The names and forms (Nama-rupa), the appearances that you see outside are all effects of Maya. Maya is Avyakta (hidden, unmanifested); Avyakriti (undifferentiated). It is the indescribable power of the Lord (Anirvachaneeya), being the equilibrium of Sattva (purity), Rajas (Passion) and Tamas (inertia). When this equilibrium is disturbed by the will of the Lord to give fruits to the Karmas of Jivas, this world is projected at the beginning of the Maha Kalpa.

Brahman thought: "There indeed are the worlds; I shall create the protectors of the worlds." He gathered the Purusha (Hiranyagarbha) from out of the water only and fashioned him. He heated him by the heat of meditation (Aikshanta). When he was thus heated, his heart burst out, from the heart, the mind came, from the mind the moon, the presiding deity of the mind. Heart is the seat of the mind. So the mind came out when the heart burst out. In Samadhi the mind goes to its original seat, the heart. In sleep also it rests in the heart with a veil of ignorance between the mind and the Brahman." (Aittareya Upanishad 1—3—4.

From the Avyaktam or the unmanifested (Maya) the Mahat Tattva comes out first, just as the sprout shoots out from the seed in the ground. From Mahat proceeds Ahankar. Then come mind, senses, Prana and Tanmatras, the five gross elements come into being. Then the whole external universe is created out of the five gross elements.

The qualities are twenty four. They are Sabda (sound), Sparsa (touch), Rupa (colour), Rasa (taste), Gandha (smell), Parimana (dimension), Sankhya (number), Samyoga (conjunction), Vibhaga (disjunction), Prithaktwa (separateness), Gurutva (weight), Dravatva (fluidity), Paratva (viscidity), Samskara (tendency), Dhee (understanding), Dwesha (hatred), Sukha (pleasure), Duhkha (pain), Iccha (desire), Dharma (merit), Adharma (demerit) and Prayatna (effort).

Substances are nine. They are five Bhutas or elements, Dik (space), Kaala (time), Atman (soul) and Manas (mind).

Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha form the Chaturvyuha, four-fold form, the four forms being identical with the Highest Self, the individual soul, the internal organ (Manas) and self assertive principle (egoism or Ahankara).

A day of Brahma is equivalent to 432 million human years. This is supposed to be the duration of the world.

Destruction is involution of anything into its cause.

6. STUDENTS OF BRAHMAVIDYA

Vajasrava made a gift of all his wealth in Visvajit sacrifice. He had a son by name Nachiketas. Vajasrava made a gift of useless old cows to the Ritviks. Nachiketas was not pleased with the gifts of his father. He thought that his father might not get the full benefits of his Yajna and that his father might attain those worlds which are devoid of happiness.

Therefore he asked his father: "Father to whom will you give me?" He said this again and again thrice. The father was greatly annoyed and said in angry terms: "Unto death I will give you."

Nachiketas then went to the mansion of Lord Yama. Lord Yama was away. So Nachiketas fasted for three nights.

Lord Yama returned. He said to Nachiketas: "As you have lived here without food, Oh Brahmin ! in my house ask three boons in return, My prostration unto you."

Then Nachiketas asked three boons from Yama. 1. "That Gautama my father, may be free from anxiety, be calm in mind, may have no anger against me and that he may welcome me gladly." 2. "O death! thou knowest the fire which leads to heaven. Explain to me the fire (sacrifice) by which those whose world is heaven attain immortality." 3. "This doubt as to what becomes of a man after death—some say he is and some say he is not—kindly teach the truth about this.

Lord Yama granted gladly the first two boons. He declined to grant the third boon. He said, "Here, even the Gods, of yore had doubts. This is a very subtle question.

It is not easy to know. O Nachiketas, ask for some other boon. Do not press me on this point.

Lord Yama wanted to find the sincerity of Nachiketas and find out whether he had true Vairagya and discrimination. He offered him many temptations such as elephants, wealth, lordship over dominions, nymphs to serve, long life, sons, graandsons, cattle, gold, horses, chariots, lutes.

Though thus tempted by Yama, Nachiketas stood firm with an unagitated mind. He said: ‘Oh Lord Yama, these are ephemeral things. These tend to the decay of the vigour of all Indriyas or senses. Even the longest life is verily short. What is time before infinity? These nymphs and other enjoyments only produce harm, as they destroy virtue, strength, intellect, vigour, fame. They make one an atheist. Keep the chariots, gold, dance, music, nymphs for thyself alone. I want that boon alone which can reveal the nature of Atman and the immortality of the soul."

Lord Yama eventually yielded to the request of Nachiketas, as he found him to be a qualified aspirant. He imparted to him the knowledge of the Self, Brahma Vidya.

Swetaketu Aruneya (grandson of Aruni) repaired to the assembly of the Panchalas. Pravahana Jaivali (the king of Panchala, a Kshatriya) asked him. "Boy, has your father instructed you?" "Yes, sir," he replied. "Do you know to what place men go from here?" "No, Sir" he replied. "Do you know where the path of the Devas and the path of the fathers diverge?" "No, sir," he replied. "Do you know why that world (that of fathers) becomes full?" "No, sir," he replied. "Then why did you say that you have been instructed? How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been taught?" Then the boy troubled in mind came to his father's place and said, "Sir, though you have not taught me, you said you have instructed me. That fellow of a Rajanya (king of Kshatriya clan) asked me five questions, and I could not answer even one of them." The father said, "If I had known these why should not have I told them to you."

Then Gautama went to the King's palace and when he reached the palace, the king offered him proper respect. In the morning, he went to the king in his assembly. The king said to him: "O Revered Gautama, ask a boon of such things as belong to the world of men." He replied: "Let such things as men possess remain with you. Tell me the same "speech" which you addressed to my boy."

The king was perplexed. He commanded: "Stay here for some time." Then he said: "As to what you have asked me, Gautama, this knowledge did not go to any Brahmana before this; and therefore, this teaching belonged among all the people, to the Kshatriyas alone."

Janaka asked Yajnavalkya: "O what light is this Purusha?" He said, "Of the light of the sun, O king of kings. By the light of the sun man sits down, walks about, performs work and returns home. It is even so, O Yajnavalkya."

"Of what light, O Yajnavalkya, is this Purusha, when the sun has set?" "The moon is even his light. By the moon light he sits down, walks about, performs his work and returns home." "It is even so, O Yajnavalkya."

"Of what light, O Yajnavalkya, is this Purusha, when the sun has set and the moon has set?" "The fire is even his light. By the fire light he sits down, walks about, performs his work and returns home." It is even so, O Yajnavalkya."

"Of what light, O Yajnavalkya, is this Purusha, when the sun has set, the moon has set and the fire is at rest?" "Speech is even his light. By the light of speech he sits down, walks about, performs his work and returns home." Therefore O king of kings, at a time when one cannot distinguish his own hand, he resorts there, whence speech proceeds there." It is even so, O Yajnavalkya."

"Of what light, O Yajnavalkya, is this Purusha, when the sun has set, the moon has set, fire is at rest, and speech is at rest?" "Soul (Atma) is even his light. By the light of the soul he sits down, walks about, performs his work and returns home." Which soul? "That Soul which among the organs has the nature of knowledge, which abides in the heart and is the Purusha who is the Light."

7. PEACE IN POLITICS

Politics is Raja Dharma. It comes in Mahabharata, Manu and Yajnavalkya Smritis. Dharma, religion and God co-exist. Politics without real moral and spiritual basis will undoubtedly dwindle into an airy nothing. The foundation of society and politics is God. Therefore Politics can never be divorced from religion and ethics. Dry politics will end in corruption and disaster. The goal of a politician must be Self-realisation in and through the world, through service of country.

Swaraj for India or any nation can only be achieved if political activities go hand in hand with spiritual practices. The workers should regard that every action is Yoga and an offering unto the Lord. They should be freed from selfishness, egoism, mineness, greed, lust, etc., and possess the divine virtues, viz., purity, harmlessness, truthfulness, forbearance, self-restraint, cosmic love, large-heartedness coupled with broad and universal tolerance, and a strong conviction in the existence of God. They should have a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy and principles of Karma Yoga. They should work without expectation of fruits and without the agency-mentality and without the idea, "I am the doer." They should offer all works and their fruits to the Lord as Ishwararpana.

The system of hanging a murderer is not good. We deprive him of the chances for his education and further improvement. He should not be hanged but should be properly educated.

Just as there is severe labour -pains before the birth of the child, so also there is pain now in the world for the birth of a new order, a new era, a new culture and a new civilisation.

When people become furious they have no idea of right and wrong. They lose their power of discrimination. They exhibit brutal force. They lose the sense of justice.

O friends of peace! Wake up! Be vigilant! Work with tremendous energy. Disseminate peace far and wide. Leave no stone unturned in your endeavour. Move heaven and earth to establish peace. Think of peace. Talk of peace. Work for peace. Fight for peace. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will enter the kingdom of God. When there is peace in the land, saints can disseminate their spiritual teachings and aspirants can practise Yoga.

8. HINTS FOR ASPIRANTS

You can learn many spiritual lessons from the baby. The baby has a message to give to all. You will find in the baby the revelations of the Upanishads, the inspiring experiences of the seers, sages and Rishis. You will find in the baby a new practical religion. The baby imparts the message of yore, peace, harmony, freedom and bliss. Watch the baby carefully. Learn the spiritual lessons and become wise. A new-born baby is always in Samadhi or blissful union with the Lord. How steady are his eyes. He is Brahman himself. Maya enters in him only when he begins to look steadily at his parents, recognise them and smile.

Sin is expiated by auspicious acts, by publishing it widely, by repentance, by almsgiving, by penances, by sojourn to Teerthas or holy places of pilgrimage after renunciation of everything, by constant meditation on the scriptures. He who has practised renunciation is incapable of committing sins anew.

"Those Brahmins who are superior to us—they should be comforted by thee with seats, etc. Give with faith. Do not give without faith. Give with joy, with modesty, with fear, with kindness. Then if there be any doubts as to any action or conduct, in that case conduct thyself as Brahmins who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein, whether they are appointed or not, as long as they are not cruel, but devoted to duty. Then in respect of persons accused of sin, conduct thyself as Brahmins who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein whether they are appointed or not, as long as they are not cruel, but devoted to duty. This is the rule. This is the teaching. This is the purport of the Veda. This is the command. This should be followed—this verily should be followed." This is real education.

Even the most healthy, young man cannot get that sweet deep sleep for more than an hour. The Western psychologists also have agreed on this point. Sleep for six hours is quite sufficient for an adult. Go to bed at 10 p.m. and get up at 4 a.m.

If two things are compared, they are so only with respect to some particular point or a particular feature they have in common. Examples illustrate on point only. You cannot find entire similarity in all respects. Entire equality of the two can never be found.

We need not be one another's enemies because we have different ideas or different policies or different ideals or different opinions.

When you write letters write legibly, giving long full space between lines. Don't be a great miser. If you write illegibly, if you scribble, if you write the contents of an envelope in a post card, you do a very bad Karma. The reader has to strain his eyes. He is annoyed. He has to waste much of his precious time.

If you constantly think of the spirit, you will also become a ghost in accordance with the immutable law or theory that the future birth is determined by the last thought of a man when he leaves the body. The last thought is the resultant product of the strong thoughts he entertains in his life. Think of God or Brahman always, your last thought will be that of God or Brahman and you will attain immortality and freedom.

Communication with the spirits and their messages have established the fact or truth that there is life beyond. But you will not gain much by trying to be in communication with departed souls. You can help the departed souls to enjoy peace and you can comfort them by your prayer and Kirtan by doing oblations and Sraddha. By your attempt to have communication with them you will make them earth-bound souls. You will not allow them to move to higher spiritual regions. They will get attached to you and you also will get attached to them. Further the thoughts of spirits will trouble you in your dream. The message of the spirits do not turn out to be true always. Try your level best to realise your own Self. All the worlds will rejoice. You will help the whole world. All your ancestors will get peace. He who purifies himself purifies the whole world and his forefathers. Do not run after the conch or shell. Get hold of the priceless Atmic pearl that is within you.

The spring has come with all its beauties. Enjoy the spring of life. Let there be a spring in your life—a life of sweet communion with the Lord, with the flowers and fruits of Self-realisation, devotion, Brahma Jnana, freedom, immortality, peace and bliss.

People do not throw away old things. Old sugar, old rice, old pickles, old sugarcandy, old ghee that is kept for fifty years are all highly valuable because they are of high potency. They can eradicate many diseases. So people keep them with perfect safety. Even so an old wife is very dear to a husband with a Vedantic turn of mind who beholds the

Self in all bodies, an old honest servant is dear to the sensible master; old sincere friends are very dear to some conscientious people.

You are surrounded on all sides by microbes and germs. Your body is filled with microbes and germs. Yet you live. This is a great mystery. This is the greatest of all wonders.

Individuality is different from personality. There is no harm in developing one's individuality. A man of strong individuality is a fit person for practice of Vedanta or Jnana Yoga. "Aham Asmi"—I exist. This is individuality. It is Sattwic. Personality is one's own mental creation. It is Rajasic.

Personality is a great thing in the West. It is nothing for a Hindu. Titles, honours, position, rank, prestige, hang about one's personality. Extinction of personality is a deathblow for a Westerner. Extinction of personality is a joy for a Hindu. A Hindu exerts himself to destroy his little personality to get immortality. Personality is egoism. A Hindu welcomes Tyaga, Sannyasa (renunciation). The religious instinct has been always strong in the Hindu mind. The very words "Tyaga" and "Sannyasa" create terror, fear in the minds of Western people. "Giving up" is ingrained in the minds of Hindus. "Taking up" is ingrained in the minds of Westerners.

Maya is mysterious! She deludes and binds the Jivas in a mysterious manner. She destroys the understanding and makes them slaves of passion, greed and power. The old mother forces her son to marry. She thinks that her daughter-in-law will serve her nicely in her old age, will shampoo her legs at night and serve her with betel nuts and tea. As soon as the daughter-in-law enters the house she becomes the mistress of the house. She holds the keys of the money-box, trunks etc. The mother-in-law expects that her daugter-in-law should obey her. The cultured daughter-in-law expects that her ignorant mother-in-law should obey her. The mother-in-law tries to control the young daughter-in-law and vice versa. The daughter-in-law thinks that she is ill-treated by her mother-in-law, and vice versa. Every day there are quarrels in the house. The poor son is in a great fix. He finds it difficult to please his mother and his wife also. He is beaten on both sides like the drum. There is no peace in the house, although they have plenty of money and varieties of objects. What is the use of trying to control others? What is the earthly use of powers, when everything is perishable? Learn to obey. Learn to serve and please others. Everybody will be under your control. You can penetrate into the hearts of all. Obedience is better than sacrifice. Obedience will annihilate your egoism and will give you inner spiritual strength, joy and peace.

If the bacteria that absorb nitrogen directly from the air are introduced into the human body, then man can dispense with food, because the bacteria will help the man in supplying the nitrogen. There will be symbiosis between man and the bacteria. Bacteria will supply the required quantity of nitrogen to man and in turn will get something from man. Symbiosis is a term introduced by De Bary to denote certain kinds of physiological partnership between organisms of different kinds best restricted to such intimate and complimentary partnership as exist between algoid and fungoid elements in lichens or between uni-cellular algae and Radiolarians. The God of many persons is nowadays confined to their stomachs only. If the above experiment turns out to be successful, man can devote much time to divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits. Thanks to these bacteria which help man in the control of his hunger and in giving up of food.

If you want to purchase a good leather suit-case, you move in the bazaar from shop to shop and you eventually hit at the proper shop in suitable surroundings which can satisfy your desire. The shop-keeper also is eagerly waiting to find a suitable purchaser. This is a case of double coincidence. Similarly, a poor boy who had an intense desire to go to Oxford for his higher studies but who was not able to have his desire gratified in this incarnation, gets suitable environments in his next incarnation and is born in a rich family who are also waiting for getting a son who can go to foreign countries for his degree. This is also a case of double coincidence.

"Chakshurbhyam Hasate Vidwan, Dantaushtabhyam tu Madhyamah;

Adhama Attahasena Na hasanti muneeswarah."

The learned or the wise smile through the eyes; the middle class smile through teeth and lips; the lowest make a roaring laughter; but the Muneeshwara never smiles nor laughs.

Neither long for life nor wish for death but wait for the time like the servant on his master. This is the indifferent mental state of a Jnani (Udaseena Vritti).

Sri Chakra is the highest point or acme to which Yoga practices can lead. When you attain perfection in Sri Vidya, there is nothing more left for you to gain by the practice of Yoga.

A cooly has limited cares with his daily wages; a clerk has the responsibilities of his work; a Tahasildar has all the cares of a Thahsil; a deputy collector of his sub-division; a collector of his district; a governor of a province; and a viceroy of all the British possessions in India. "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." The greater a man; the more his cares and responsibilities.

Those who go to Brahma-loka on account of excellence of their merits hold responsible positions in the Cosmic hierarchy in the next Kalpa, according to their merits. Worshippers of Hiranyagarbha, enter into Para-Brahman along with Hiranyagarbha or Brahma upon the final dissolution of the Brahmanda.

The sacrifices such as Jyotishtoma which enable the performers to dwell in heaven and other ceremonies which are performed with a particular motive or desire are called Kamya Karma. Slaying of a Brahmin, drinking and other vices are Nishiddha Karma or prohibited acts. Daily rites such as Sandhyavandana are known as Nitya Karma.

Chapter Thirteen

JIVANMUKTA

1. JIVANMUKTA

(CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCES OF)

The Jivanmukta is a liberated sage. He is released even while living. He lives in the world but he is not of the world. He always revels in the eternal bliss of the Supreme Self. He has no identification with the body and senses. Hence he has no idea of enjoyment or enjoyer when he exhausts the residue of his Prarabdha. He has no idea of action or agency. He roams about happily without attachment or egoism, with a balanced mind and an equal vision. His state is indescribable. He is Brahman Himself.

A Jivanmukta is a great spiritual hero. He is an enlightened sage who has knowledge of the Self. He is preeminent amongst men. He is the conqueror of the mind. He is absolutely free from desires, craving, fear, delusion, pride, egoism, etc.

For a Jivanmukta there is no distinction between a rogue and a saint, gold and stone, high and low, man and woman, man and animal, censure and praise, honour and dishonour. He beholds the one Self everywhere. He sees divinity in everyone. As he is mindless, all differences and barriers have vanished from him.

In the vast ocean of Brahman full of nectar of homogeneous bliss, the Jivanmukta neither sees nor hears. He remains in his own Atma and in his own nature of Sat-chit-ananda Rupa. He sees his Atma as secondless through Nirvikalpa Samadhi. His vision or experience is beyond description. He has attained supreme quiescence. He is ever happy. He is of a pure nature. He has realised himself to be Chaitanya or pure-consciousness alone. He is ever resting at perfect ease in the pleasure-garden of his own Atma.

Raja Janak asked a sage: "O Venerable sage? How is it you do not perform Sandhya at day break, mid-day and sun-set?" The sage replied: "O Rajan, the sun of Knowledge, Jnana Surya, is ever. shining in Chidakasa of my heart There is neither sun-rise nor sun-set for me. How can I perform Sandhya when there is neither sun-rise nor sun-set? Further my old grand mother Maya is dead." Raja Janak bowed his head before the sage and silently left the place. He came to understand that the sage is a real Jivanmukta who is established in Brahmic Consciousness.

How did space manifest in the spaceless Brahman? How did East, West, North and South come into existence? This is also a creation or trick of the mind. If you are tired even a furlong appears to be a mile. If you are vigorous even a mile seems to be a furlong. For a Jivanmukta or seer there is neither time nor space. He beholds the one Brahman which is timeless and spaceless.

A Jivanmukta is absolutely free from egoism, doubt, fear and grief. These are the four important signs that indicate that one has attained perfection.

Freedom from Harsha-Soka (exhilaration and depression), equal vision, balanced state of mind and Trikala Jnana (knowledge of the past, present and future) are the important Lakshanas or features of a Jivanmukta.

Identification with body (Deha Adhyasa) brings pain. When one attains knowledge of the Self, he will experience no pain although there is some disease in the body. He is above body-consciousness. A highly developed Hatha Yogi only who has control over the atoms and Kaya-Siddhi can keep his body without ailment. Rise above body and always identify yourself with painless, diseaseless Atma. You will be free from pain. There is no pain if you are suffering from any disease when you are in deep sleep. There is no pain even if the leg is amputated when you are under chloroform. It is the linking of the mind with the body that causes pain. If the mind is taken away from the body consciously and fixed on the All-blissful Self through constant meditation you will have no pain even if the body is subject to any kind of ailments. This is Jnana Yoga Sadhana. Prarabdha has to be worked out. Therefore the body will be subjected to disease. The Jivanmukta will not experience any pain. The on-lookers may wrongly imagine that the sage is also suffering. It is a serious mistake. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had cancer of the throat. Buddha had chronic dysentry. Sri Sankara had piles. But they experienced no pain. When the doctors asked Ramakrishna Paramahamsa: "Why do you suffer like this? Can you not undergo the operation?" He replied "I have given my mind to Mother Kaali. How can I think of body? How can I bring my mind back into the cage of flesh. I am always in Bliss."

Santi, Santosh (contentment), Samata (poise or balance of mind), free from joy and grief (Harsha-Shoka), and Nirbhayata (fearlessness) are the five cardinal signs of a Jivanmukta.

The expression of a man of self-realised will bring peace, harmony, power and strength to the hearers. They are the outpourings of his inner life of glory, peace and blessedness. He will breathe and radiate joy and love to all around.

He who attains knowledge of the Self is absolutely free from all desires, because he knows everything in himself, and there is nothing outside of himself for him to continue to desire. "Aptakamasya kaa spriha—what can he desire who has everything." Brahman is Paripoorna (all-full), Nirapeksha (self-contained). How can desire arise in the mind of one who has realised the Self, who beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self?

That illumined sage whose mind is merged in his true nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda, who has conquered the enemy—ignorance—who is destitute of 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness', who has rooted out pride, self-love, envy and hatred, revels in the ocean of boundless bliss.

Who is a Paramahamsa? He who sees Atma in all beings, he who takes out Atma only from mixture of five Koshas and five elements, just as the swan takes out and drinks the milk alone from a mixture of milk and water, is a Paramahamsa. He who is as pure as the flowing waters of the Ganges in winter, he who remains unattached by leading a life of Parivrajaka or itinerant monk is a Paramahamsa.

He who knows the highest Brahman, atttains immortality and enjoys eternal bliss. He crosses grief and goes beyond good and evil. He is free from doubt, delusion, limitation. He is free from the three knots of the heart, viz., Avidya, Kama and Karma. His state is beyond description.

The Sanchita Karmas (accumulated storehouse of Karmas) depend upon Avidya (Avidya Asraya). The Kriyamana Karma depends upon egoism (Ahankarasraya). The

Prarabdha Karma depends upon the physical body. In a Jivanmukta ignorance is destroyed by the dawn of knowledge. So Sanchita Karmas are destroyed. He has no egoism. So Kriyamana Karmas (current actions) are destroyed. From this viewpoint he has no body as he identifies himself with the all-pervading Brahman. So the three kinds of Karmas are destroyed when one attains knowledge of the Atman.

Those who have done good Karmas go to Swarga. Those who have done Upasana go to Brahma-Loka. Jnanins do not enter any Loka. They get merged in the all-pervading Brahman.

Gargi was a Jnani. Her name comes in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. She appeared quite nude in the court of Raja Janaka and had philosophical controversy with sage Yajnavalkya.

For a Jnani, his upper shoulder is his pillow, the sky is his canopy, the earth filled with grass is his silken bed or fine green carpet, the stars are so many electric lights, Vayu Bhagavan and Virat are his obedient servants who are moving the universal Panka, the space is his cloth, hands are his 'ever-ready' vessels. Embracing renunciation as his wife, he sleeps without any anxiety, anywhere and enjoys supreme peace or unalloyed felicity amidst his children Jnana, Vairagya and Uparati.

A Jivakoti Jivanmukta is one who has realised the Self through gradual evolution and by his own efforts. He has released himself from Jivahood to Brahmanhood by meditation He has taken many births. Anyhow he has managed to free himself from the round of births and deaths. He can help a few persons only. He cannot elevate many people. He can be compared to a bullock-cart which can take 4 or 5 persons or a plank in a river. Whereas the eternally free 'Ishwar-koti' Jivanmukta was born in the world for establishing Dharma, for the protection of the virtuous persons and for doing good to the humanity. He does not practise any Sadhana or meditation in this birth. He is an Amsa of the Lord. He is a born Siddha. He is illumined from his very boyhood. He can elevate many people. He manifests and disappears when the Lokasangraha work is over. He can be compared to a train which takes a large number of persons or a big steamer in an ocean. Sri Sankara was an Ishwara-koti, and Sri Vamadeva was a Jiva-koti Jivanmukta.

Jnani is of two kinds viz., Kevala Jnani and Siddha Jnani. Kevala Jnani is one who is not able to help the world much but who has obtained Self-realisation for himself. He is good for himself only. He is like the star which glitters at night only. He is not known to the world at large. But a Siddha Jnani is a glorious person who like the sun, shines in the world. He is a Jnani and a Yogi combined. He can help the world immensely. Sri Sankaracharya was a Siddha Jnani. Madalasa was a Kevala Jnani.

World needs men rich in intuition. Awakened souls who have attained illumination are a blessing to the world. They will guide people in the path of righteousness and help them to cross the ocean of ignorance and attain immortality and eternal bliss. They will guide the heads of the educational institutions.

A Vedanti says: "Nothing is mine or everything is mine." As world is mere appearance, he is quite right in saying "nothing is mine." As he has realised the Self, as the world has no permanent existence apart from Brahman or the Self, he says: 'Everything is mine.' He has controlled the organ of smell and Prithvi Tattwa and so all objects of smell and sense belong to him. He has controlled the palate or tongue and the Apas Tattwa and so all objects of taste, fruits and other dainties belong to him. He has controlled the organ of sight or eye and Agni Tattwa and so all objects of sight and beauties and gardens belong to him. He has controlled the organ of touch and Vayu Tattwa and so all the objects of touch belong to him. He has controlled the organ of hearing and the Akasa Tattwa and so all sounds and music belong to him.

A cat made up of sugar is a real cat for a child. Sugar does not appear for the child as it is swallowed up by the cat. The cat has concealed the sugar. For an adult it is just sugar only. The sugar has swallowed up the cat. Even so for a Jivanmukta or liberated sage, Brahman swallows all illusory names and forms. He sees only Brahman everywhere. All names and forms vanish. For a worldly man, the names and forms have swallowed or concealed Brahman. He beholds the illusory forms only.

Yajnavalkya said to Maitreyi "O Maitreyi, impelled by her great love for Siva, Parvati has wrought herself into half of his body; but you with far greater love are yearning to mingle with the whole of my being." He who attains Self-realisation or knows Brahman enters into all, as he becomes the inner Self of all beings.

For a Jivanmukta who beholds the all-pervading, immortal, indivisible, self-luminous Atma everywhere, there remains nothing to be attained or known. He has attained perfection, highest bliss and highest knowledge.

Though a Jnani identifies himself with all the bodies of the world (Samashti, Abhimani, cosmic identification), yet he is aware that he has a little special connection with the particular body he is wearing which is brought about by his own Prarabdha.

A Jivanmukta or a Bhagawata has lustrous eyes. He has a protrusion on the top of the head and Trikuti, the space between the two eye-brows. Whatever he says will be impressed in your mind. You cannot forget it till the end of your life. He possesses tremendous power of attraction. He will clear all your doubts in a marvellous manner. You will enjoy a peculiar joy and peace in his presence. All your doubts will be cleared in his presence. Silence is his language. He is very compassionate and free from selfishness, anger, greed, egoism, lust and pride. He is an embodiment of Truth, peace, knowledge and bliss.

Just as you think when you look at a picture which contains fruits, flame, knife, trees, rivers, etc., that they are false, so also the Jivanmukta or liberated sage feels when he looks at the world that all the forms are false.

As nobody is afraid of a serpent or a tiger in a picture, so also the Jivanmukta who has knowledge of the Self is not afraid of the living serpent or tiger.

That sage who has realised that there is no other reality in the universe than Brahman, that he is Brahman Himself and that everything is Brahman is freed from the round of births and deaths. He has attained freedom, perfection and immortality. He is a Jivanmukta i.e., who has attained liberation while living.

When you behold a big mass of people in a great festival, you simply see them, you have no attachment for anybody. Even so a Jivanmukta beholds this world. He has no attachment for anyone.

There was a big hall made up of glass in a Rajah's palace Whenever the Rajah entered the hall, he saw his own self or reflection on all sides. He was immensely pleased to see his self everywhere. His dog also entered the hall. There was the dog's reflection on all sides. It thought that there were several dogs on all sides. It began to jump here and there to bite the other dogs. Even so a sage sees his own self everywhere in this world and feels great joy, whereas an ignorant man thinks that other people are different and separate from him, dislikes them and fights with them.

The knower of Brahman shakes off good and evil and becomes freed from sorrow. He attains supreme identity with the supreme Self. He takes delight in the Soul.

The way of living in Jivanmuktas differs. Bhageeratha lived in a princely style. Another sage lives in a beggarly manner. One sage is always in a meditative mood. He never works. He never talks. He lives always in seclusion. Jada Bharat lives this kind of life. Another sage lives in a busy, crowded city. He plunges himself in service. He talks with the people. He delivers lectures, holds religious classes, writes books, etc. Sri Sankara led this kind of life. This is due to Prarabdha. Every sage has his own Prarabdha. If all sages have the same kind of living and the same kind of Prarabdha, this world will be like a prison. Variety in manifestation is the nature of Prakriti.

Some orthodox Vedantins say: "Even a Jivanmukta or a Vyavahara Jnani who works will have anger and pain. But it is Abhasa Matra (mere semblance). It is like a burnt-cloth. It is like an impression made in water of a river by striking against it with a stick." This is wrong. A Jivanmukta cannot exhibit even a trace of anger at any time, under any condition. He is perfectly mindless. How can anger arise then in him? Quite impossible. Have you not heard the story of Suka Deva? Did he not possess absolute serenity of mind when he was badly treated by the gate-keeper of Raja Janak? Did he exhibit anger of the Abhasamatra type even?

Ishwara can work by resting in Nirguna Brahman without losing Nirguna Brahmic consciousness. He has control over Maya. An Avatara also can work by resting in his own Swaroopa. But a Jnani who is in the seventh Bhumika cannot work (old orthodox school).

A Jnani who is in the sixth or the seventh Bhumika cannot work in the world. He is always absorbed in Brahman. He will have to come down to the fourth stage or fifth Bhumika if he wants to work (old orthodox school).

A Jnani has double consciousness. He can work like an Avatar even in the sixth or seventh Bhumika by resting on his own Swaroopa. It is not necessary for him to come down (Choranaree-Drishtanta; the illustration of the crow which uses its one eye only this side and that side by mere turning). (New School of thought).

A Jivanmukta cannot disappear as soon as he realises Brahman. If that be the case, how are religious instructions to aspirants possible? We have seen that aspirants get religious lessons from Jivanmuktas.

As milk poured into milk, oil into oil and water into water gets united and one with it, so also the Jnani who has realised the Self becomes identical with the Self. There is no doubt of this. Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Madalasa, Chudalai—had realised their oneness with the Atman and had left their experiences and bold teachings to the suffering humanity at large.

Just as camphor melts and becomes one with the fire, so also the mind of the Jnani melts and becomes one with Brahman.

The Jnani, who has realised the Atman, becomes one with Atman. He becomes Brahman itself. His three bodies are burnt by the fire of knowledge. Though the on-looker may perceive his physical body, the Jnani has no body from his own Drishti, as he identifies himself with Brahman.

A Jivanmukta is a powerhouse of spiritual energy. He radiates his spiritual currents to the different corners of the world. Sit before him. Your doubts will be cleared by themselves. You will feel a peculiar thrill of joy and peace in his presence.

What a great wonder. What meritorious act did these Jivanmuktas do! They have become liberated sages while living. Trough their Sat-Sankalpa they work wonders. They are Gods on earth. How powerful they are. They always possess unruffled minds. Wherever they go, they influence people. They do not speak and yet teach the aspirants through their silence. Adorations to such exalted beings, Knowledge is power. A doctor who has knowledge of medicines of the physical machine and its workings, of therapeutics and of diagnosis and treatment of diseases is a powerful man. He can influence thousands. A lawyer who has knowledge of law has got influence and power. The commander-in-chief and field-marshall who have knowledge of manoeuvres and movements of the battle-field and of the tactics of the war have wonderful influence and power. The whole army stand electrified before them and are ready to obey their commands. The raising of the policeman's finger stops all motor-cars in the streets. Just as heat is inseparable from fire, so also power is inseparable from knowledge. Brahman, the source for Maya, is the store-house for all powers. A Jnani who has knowledge of Brahman has got tremendous powers. He wills through his Sat-Sankalpa. Everything comes into being.

A Jnani has the power of converting foods of Tamasic nature like meat, etc., into Sattwic stuffs (pure articles). He can turn meat into Halvah. He does not eat anything for pleasure or enjoyment as worldly persons do. No impression is produced in his mind. He feels always as Sakshi (witness). He has separated himself from body, mind and Indriyas. He always derives bliss from Atman inside. He will never feel that he has taken a very delicious dish of any kind of food. His state is indescribable, my dear friend Jayadayal, you cannot understand him.

The expressions of a man of self-realisation will bring peace, harmony, power and strength to the hearers. They are the outpourings of his inner life of glory, peace and blessedness. He will breathe and radiate joy and love to all around.

There is a Yogi in the neighbourhood of Cawnpore. He has many Siddhis. He roams about in rags. He is in the state of Avadhooth. Once a European officer forced him to carry a trunk on his head, when he was travelling through a village. The European officer was riding on horse-back in front. When he turned back, he saw the trunk moving in the air 3 feet above the head of Mangal Das. The officer was quite astonished. He got down from his horse, prostrated before the saint and apologised in strong terms for the serious mistake that he had committed.

A Jivanmukta or sage becomes aware that he is free. He realises that rebirth is exhausted. He realises also that he has fulfilled all his duties and that there is no further return to this world. He further realises that he has obtained everything, that all his desires are gratified, that he has nothing more to learn and that he has obtained the highest knowledge.

The world has vanished for a Jivanmukta. He beholds Brahman only everywhere. Even if the world comes back again, he is not deluded by it, just as the man is not deluded by the mirage or the rope-snake after he has fully known that it is only mirage or the rope-snake. Even if the world comes back again for him, it is no longer the same world of pairs of opposites, troubles, tribulations, pains and sorrows, it is not the prison of miseries and afflictions. The world of troubles and sorrows has changed into Sat-Chit-Ananda, existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. All barriers, all distinctions, all differences, all dualities and all Water-tight compartments are destroyed by the vision of the one all-pervading Soul. He has cosmic vision. He experiences always self-delight and self-knowledge. He rejoices always in his own Self. Nothing can disturb him, as he is established in his own Self. His state is indescribable.

Just as you feel that a pair of worn-out shoes is loosly hanging to your feet and that you are distinct from the shoes, a Jnani will feel that a worn-out physical body is sticking to him and that he is Brahman himself in reality quite distinct and separate from the body.

Just as a drunkard who is intoxicated with liquor is not aware of his cloth that is loosely hanging down from his waist, so also a Jnani who is intoxicated with Brahmic bliss is not aware of his body.

Even a Jivanmukta will experience pain. But his feeling is entirely different from the experience of a worldly man (Old Vedantic School).

The appearance of the phenomenal world will be felt by the Jivanmukta. But he will have a different kind of experience. He will feel that the whole world within his own Self as Atma. The Nischaya that the world is Mithya (unreal) will be ingrained in his mind.

In Swapna, a man becomes a King, enjoys all the pleasures that can be desired for; afterwards he is defeated by the enemy, he goes to the forest and practises austerities. Then he dreams that he is a beggar. Within half an hour, he imagines that he has lived for eighty years. He dreams that he is bitten by a snake and is dead. He opens his eyes now out of fear and knows that everything is a dream only. Just as when awake, a man does not perceive the things he saw in his dream, so also a sage perceives not the universe when he gets knowledge of Brahman.

A Jnani sees the whole universe existing in himself and sees the all as one soul.

The sun gives light in the day-time. The moon and the stars give light at night-time. Through which instrument can you perceive light? You can perceive light through the eye only. A blind man has no idea of light. By what can you understand whether the eye is closed or open? Through the Buddhi. It is Buddhi that gives light to the eyes even. Had there been no Buddhi, you will not be able to see the light of the sun. What gives light to the Buddhi even? It is Atma. It is Self-luminous Light of lights. I am that. There I am. 'Tatra Aham'.

The liberated sage says:

> "I am the earth. I am in the earth. I am the water. I am the fire. I am in the fire. I am the air. I am in the air. I am the flower. I am in the flower. I am the tree. I am in the tree. I am the woman. I am in the woman. I am the intellect. I am in the intellect. I am the ocean. I am in the ocean. I am the manifested Virat. I am the immanent Hiranyagarbha. I am Brahman or the transcendental Self."
>
> To whom should I offer my salutations or respects, when I am Brahman myself. When there is nothing save myself, who is to respect whom? Who is to salute whom?
>
> I know that mighty Purusha, who is resplendent like
>
> > the Sun and who transcends all darkness (ignorance). By knowing Him alone one conquers death. There is no other way for salvation.

I see a world in a grain of sand, a heaven in a wild flower, infinity in the palm of my hand and eternity in an hour.

In me the universe had its origin
In me alone the whole subsists,
In me it is lost—this Brahman
The timeless, it is I myself.
Sivoham. Sivoham. Sivoham.

I am neither this body nor the mind. Chidananda Rupah Sivoham,
Sivoham—I am Siva—I am Siva—All-blissful and all wise.

I enjoy in all bodies. I suffer in all bodies. I see through all eyes. I work through all hands. I hear through all ears.

This is the feeling (cosmic identification) of a Jnani. You need not study many books. Constantly dwell on the above ideas. You will have Self-realisation soon.

The Jnani says: 'I am the All', 'I am all in all." He identifies himself with Brahman. This whole world is hanging or floating in Brahman. So he feels 'I am the All. All names and forms are inseparable from my thoughts. Thoughts are again inseparable from 'I'. Therefore it is proper to say 'I am the All'.

APPENDIX

Adapt. Adjust. Accommodate. Be Good. Do Good. Introspect. Meditate. Realize.

THE
DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
SIVANANDANAGAR

Spiritual Diary for the Month of 195 *Age*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	...	...	31	Total
1. How many hours did you sleep?											
2. When did you get up from bed?											
3. How low did you perform Asans?											
4. How long did you remain in one Asan?											
5. How long did you practise physical Exercise?											
6. How long did you concentrate on your Ishta Devata (Saguna or Nirguna Dhyana)?											
7. How long in Nama Smaran or Kirtan?											
8. How long in study of religious books?											
9. How long in the company of wise (Satsang)?											
10. How long in disinterested service? (Niskamya Karma)											
11. How many Malas of Japa?											
12. How many Pranayamas?											
13. How many Gita Slokas did you read or get by heart?											
14. How many Mantras did you write?											
15. How many hours did you observe Mouna?											

16. How many days did you observe fast and vigil?	
17. How much did you give in charity?	
18. How many lies did you tell and with what self-punishment?	
19. How many times you were angry and how long the anger lasted and with what self-punishment?	
20. How many hours did you spend in useless company?	
21. How many times did you fail in Brahmacharya?	
22. How many times did you fail in control of evil habits and with what self-punishment?	
23. What Virtues are you developing?	
24. What evil are you trying to eradicate?	
25. Which Indriya is troubling you much?	
26- When did you go to bed?	

NAME ....

....

ADDRESS ....

Signature.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, RISHIKESH

My Resolves for the Year 195 .

1. I will perform Asans and Pranayams for ....minutes daily.
2. Once a weak|fortnight|month, I will take only milk and fruits in lieu of the regular night meal.
3. I will observe fast on Ekadasi days or once a month.
4. I will give up..........(a cherished indulgence) once in every......days|months or for........days|months.
5. I will not indulge in any of the following more than once in every........days|months or for........months.

(A) *Smoking,* (B) *Playing cards,* (C) *Cinema,* (D) *Novels.*

6. I will observe Mouna (complete silence) for.......... minutes|hours daily and........minutes|hours on Sundays |holidays and utilise the time in concentration, meditation, Japa, introspection.
7. I will observe Brahmacharya (celibacy) for......weeks| months at a time.
8. I will not utter angry, harsh or vulgar words towards any one during this year.
9. I will speak the truth at any cost during this year.
10. I will not entertain hatred or evil thoughts towards any one.
11. I will give away in charity......pies|annas per rupee of my income.
12. I will perform selfless service (Nishkamya Karma Yoga) for........hours, daily|weekly.
13. I will do........Malas of Japa daily (Mala of 108 beads).
14. I will write my Ishta Mantra|Guru Mantra in a note-

book daily for........minutes or........pages.

15. I will study......Slokas of Gita daily with meaning.

16. I will maintain a daily spiritual diary and send a copy of it every month to my Guruji for getting further instruction.

17. I will get up at......a.m. daily and spend......hours in Japa, concentration, meditation, prayers, etc.

18. I will conduct Sankirtan with family members and friends daily for..........minutes|hours at night.

Signature..........................

Name and Address..................

....

....

Date...............195

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

For Quick Spiritual Progress

1. Maintain a daily Spiritual Diary and at the end of every month send a copy of it to your spiritual guide, who will give you further lessons for your progress.

2. Keep a daily Mantra note-book and regularly write in ink a page or two of your Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra.

3. Chalk out a routine or time-table for daily practice and stick to it at any cost. Distractions and obstacles are many. Be ever careful and vigilant.

4. Take a few resolves for practice during the year as shown overleaf. The resolves shown there may be scored out, added to or altered, to suit the temperament, convenience or development of the Sadhak.

5. Do not change your mode of living abruptly. You can evolve quickly in the spiritual path, develop your will-power and control your mind and the senses, by firmly adhering to the resolves.

6. If you fail in maintaining any of the resolves through lack of self-control, unknowingly or by force of circumstances, perform some Malas of Japa or give up one meal (self-punishment), to remind yourself of the broken resolve and to impress upon your mind the importance of keeping it.

7. The resolve forms should be prepared in duplicate and one copy signed and sent to your Guru, as a check on temptation to relax your efforts or ignore break any resolve under some pretext or lame excuse.

8. Request all of your friends to make and maintain such resolves, daily Spiritual Diary and Mantra note-book. Thus you can save many from the quagmire of Samsara.

Sivananda.

STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN BUDDHIST LONDON

Winter 57/8

MASSAGE: The author Sri Swami Sivananda was a practising Doctor before he organised the Divine Life Society, and in this book he gives some useful information and instructions on massage.

MOKSHA FOR ALL: A thumb-nail sketch of the spiritual life according to the Vedanta, from which much may be learnt.

WORLD-GUIDE SIVANANDA: This is a life of Sri Swami Sivananda by one of his closest disciples. By any standards the Swami is a remarkable man. Born in 1887, he became a doctor in his early life, and spent ten years in Malaya. In 1924 he renounced a successful career, and entered the Hindu Order of Sannyasa. He founded the Divine Life Society in 1936, and the Vedanta University, called the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, in 1948 on the banks of the Ganges.

The Swami's writings, books, booklets, periodicals and letters, are legion, and have carried his message, the message of the Vedanta, far and wide over the world today. One gets the unmistakable impression of a powerful and dedicated personality. His words tell of spiritual values, and stress the interior state of mind first, as did the Buddha and all other genuine religious leaders. One could wish that Buddhism threw up a few such great personalities today to do in the Buddhistic field what the Swami does so brilliantly in the Hindu.

SIVANANDA THE SINGER OF SALVATION, SIVANANDA: DAY-TO-DAY, SIVANANDA-ISM: These three books, published by the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, Rishikesh, India, all give some details of the Swamiji's life and selections from his numerous talks and writings. Worthwhile reading to those interested in the Hindu religion at its best.

HEAVEN ON EARTH

Speech delivered by. Mr. Peter Kelly *of Ireland on 13th November 1957 at Satsang.*

His Holiness, Brothers and Sisters,

I find this Ashram as heaven on the earth. I reached this Ashram about a fortnight ago and I am very well looked after by the Staff of this Ashram. Even His Holiness daily used to ask me about the progress I made in Yoga and about my health. He himself taught me two Pranayams which I am practising sincerely and honestly. When on the 11th of November, I requested His Holiness to permit me for a short stay in Vasishtha Guha, he cheerfully encouraged my idea and granted me permission. Honestly a flame of a candle cannot describe the glory of the sun. Mere mortal words cannot describe the glory of Immortality.

During my short stay here I was all along the time remembered of my home at Ireland. India and Ireland are the countries advanced in Spiritual Path.

However, I look forward sincerely for the permission again to come to this Ashram during the Christmas days and join in the celebrations.

I am rather a bit confused as I had never spoken in the past before Great Souls.

I am concluding my speech by sincerely praying to Lord to shower His choicest blessings and glory to His Holiness' name.

I was indeed pleased to receive your kind and encouraging letter. Since the receipt of your letter, I must confess that I am feeling much better. My wife and I are deeply grateful to you for your special prayers in Lord Viswanath Mandir. Since the receipt of your letter, I have been bestowed with renewed energy to enable me to carry on the work. For this I am deeply indebted to you.

—Sri P.R. Pather, Durban.

I had the great privilege of receiving a most divine and affectionate reply from your Lordship, and for this greatest kindness of yours I shall remain most grateful to you for ever. May the blessings of your holy Lordship soon come true and I get promoted to the Ph.D. Course and in fulness of time achieve the Ph.D. degree of this University without any further obstructions and setbacks. I always keep with myself both letters of your Lordship and in moments of despondency, which I am trying to overcome ever since more than before, I derive great solace from them. After all, for distressed souls like me, you our Lord are the only friend, philosopher and guide on this earth. I have rapidly gone through the immortal works of your Lordship presented by your Lordship to the Library of this University. I will remember your Lordship every day of my life.

—Sri Kedarnath Prasad, Research Student.
Cambridge, England.

I am happy to send you some miraculous happenings which occurred in Mauritius. On Monday last, a woman was suffering from strong head-ache in spite of the efficient doctors whose advice she had. It was a complete failure, but no sooner had I given her the 20 Important Spiritual instructions than she was cured, as if by Divine Magic. She accepts her new life as a Divine interpretation. She has stopped eating meat. She loves Swamiji more than anything else in this materialistic world.

My elder brother who was suffering from a throbbing pain on his back was cured by repeating the name of Sivananda several times daily. He spent money lavishly on Doctors but no good came from their instructions. Without spending a single cent on Sivananda he was cured, for, he has implict faith in his marvellous and Divine selfless work that Siva is doing for the people.

Five extremists did not believe in His teachings. But as God wants it, one of their children was suffering from Asthma. I requested them to do some Yogic exercises which were prescribed for us by Gurudev. They accepted my advice unwillingly and to tell you the Truth the boy was cured for I told him to repeat the mystic word Siva 1000 times in the morning and 500 times in the evening. The boy did accordingly. Now the extremists want to know many things about Siva. In one word, I told them—as they are Christians—that Siva is an incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ. What pleases them most is that Siva writes about Christ. They want to possess the Divine Picture of Christ.

Another incredible story for the scientists, yet true to theists who believe, that the world has been created by God. A boy who had passed all his necessary examinations but remained penniless and jobless. Nobody was willing to give him a job. One day I told him to meditate upon Siva. He did it for 3 months with spiritual tendencies.

Siva has inspired me to write this short article in front of Sookalingam Menatchee Amen Temple. This is a beautiful temple, in the district of P. Louis. The priest is a Divine man. He propagates Divine Knowledge to the people of Mauritius. He likes Sivananda's literature very much. He told me that he had seen Siva in India.

I am confident that Siva is guiding and spiritualising the Mauritians in the field of spiritualism.

Today I am going to stay at P. Louis where many friends of mine will pray for the longevity of Siva. I hope that God will give permission to Siva to live for many years more so that many people might find happiness, peace and inner spiritual strength. Our devotion to Siva is indescribable. We are his staunch admirers.

There are many people who look upon him as a real God. The members of my family regard him as Incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna. May Siva live for 100 years more.

—Sri Meeranaidoo Thoddi Somanah,
Mahebourg, Mauritius.

It is Thy grace and Thy work that has made the conference at Patan a great success, a much greater success than I or any one could imagine. How can this happen but for your grace? We all worked as instruments. These instruments can only work when the hand is versatile. Poojya Gurudev! You have worked miracles to those with open eyes in the matter of the conference. Till the last night I was not getting sleep as I was worried as to what will happen tomorrow. You did the whole show. People thronged in the *pandal* and that too with so much of patience to sit for 7 hours a day. How can this happen but for your grace?

Sri Swami Chidanandaji's and Sri Swami Jyotirmayanandaji's tour on behalf of your personality has raised in the minds of the people on this side Thy name on their lips. They have sown the seeds. We shall add manure and feed the same and

I am sure with the Grace of Gurudev a fine fruit-bearing tree will grow which will not only give fruits but cool shade to so many.

—Sri Sivananda-Adhwaryoo,
Virnagar.

I find myself incapable of expressing heartful appreciation of the wonderful atmosphere of Shanti and Bliss which we enjoyed during the short Darshan on 30th November. We did not have the opportunity of hearing your discourse but the Swara Vadyam, the Sankeertan, the Satsang and above all the very presence of the Great Master in front of us, lent divinity to that Blissful cheer enjoyed by all. For those like me who are neck deep in the office humdrum of Delhi, there can be no better relaxation than the Ganga-side repose of the Ashrama. No wonder, even the foreigners rush to your shelter in large numbers.

May your Ashrama provide all the mental rejuvenation they require.

—Air-Commodore Sri Surendranath Goyal,
New Delhi.

I am in receipt of your books—also mine on you. I wish I could write more on you. I want some time. I am immensely helped by your writings in my work here. I want to have light and sweetness here. I depend on you for my inspiration and light. I am ever sure of your kindness for me. I am unable to thank you in words.

—Sri B.S. Mathur, Principal

M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad.

My Beloved Guru, my grateful thanks for your kind and very prompt reply to my letter. Beloved Swamiji, thank you very much for your prayers in the Temple of All Faiths. I am trying hard to live a spiritual life and constantly chant the Mantra you gave me. I have developed in knowledge very much since being your disciple Swami—so much is clear to me these days. I leave my troubles in your care now and know that you will do everything in your power to make me well.

—Sri Eugenie van Velden,
Pretoria, S. Africa.

ADVANCE TELEPATHY: Sri Omji's brother came to see me. He was sitting with me in my office and was just telling me about the New Edition of "Sure Ways for Success in Life." I said I have already got the old one. He said then I may not get the new book from Swamiji as he has very few copies only. As he was still saying this, the postman brought the book parcel and on opening it, I found it was the same book. He was surprised.

—Sivananda-Vani, A.I.R., New Delhi

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya. My best thanks for your very kind letter. How can I measure the depth of your love and patience. Your Divine effulgence accompanies me in all circumstances of life; may I see Your Holiness in every face. Many thanks for your blissful prayers.

—Sri Georges Turrettini,
Geneva, Switzerland.

I received Thy loving Prasad and letter. I cannot express the joy I receive from them adequately. Swamiji, it is remarkable that whenever I am unwell, You ask me about my welfare. You so lovingly ask me about my Sadhana. With Thy Grace I was able to remember Thy Name all the time practically and I got tremendous help. I have been giving some lectures on my impressions and activities of the Ashram with a glimpse of Thy life and Your precious teachings. How kind you have been to me, Swamiji. Kindly lead me on, Gurudev by giving me that courage and determination to carry on this difficult path.

—Sri N.T. Pillay,
Mayville, Durban (South Africa).

I have received your very kind letter. I feel Thy Grace is greatly helping me in breaking through the iron gates of 'illusion', 'Avarana', which mar the "vision" of the all-pervading mysterious Paramatma which is One without a second. Everything is getting smoother day by day. Peace and Bliss is creeping slowly in all our activities here. We do not know how to thank Thy Holy Self for the keen interest you have shown in our affairs.

—Sri Dhanabhai F. Patel,
Chairman, Divine Life Society Branch,
Johannesburg, (South Africa).

Extremely grateful for your loving letter. We regularly receive Temple Prasad and we are all highly indebted to you for this generosity, magnanimity and kindness.

—B.B. Desai,
Bahrain (Persian Gulf).

Four years ago, a friend from Ceylon spoke of your spiritual realisation and brought your book Raja Yoga and the book on Pranayama. Since then, there is the hope of coming to you in India and dwelling at the Ashram. Two persons have spoken of their visits to you. One is Swami Pranavananda Saraswati now touring the Western Hemisphere on a spiritual mission.

"Swami has enlightened millions" he said, in speaking of revered Swami Sivananda. Also another person from India, Dr. Krishnamurti now returned home, visited your Ashram several times. He told me of your divine healing.

—Eva Katzman, Ottawa, Canada.

We do feel ourselves very privileged indeed that you are giving so much of your precious time to us. We do not know how to thank you for all your kindness and love you are so regularly bestowing on us. We always feel your presence here; immediately we are turning ourselves to you. We do feel that you are with us; we simply have to sing the Mantras we learnt in Rishikesh like Hare Rama, etc. It has become a second nature to both of us. Can you imagine how rich we are feeling and how we like to bring as many as possible to Divine Life? Sometimes we cannot really understand how it is possible that still so many persons are content with material life alone, notwithstanding the fact that they KNOW that such life can only bring distress and misery. We can only hope that with Your Grace and help we will soon be able to reach the height on the spiritual plane in which one is able to be a good guide and help for people in distress. We are very happy with your renewed assurance that we are Swamis in reality and we quite agree with you that true renunciation is purely mental.

—Sri Sivananda Theodora and Anterio,
Djakarta, Indonesia.

I am very happy to read your kind post card. Your encouragements are much precious but I think that You have so much favourable opinion concerning me. I express my best reverence, devotion and Pure Love.

—Sri Edouard Conneau Symours,
Chaville, France.

The aspiration I have to attain the Lotus-Feet of my Beloved Lord of the Abode of Bliss is indescribable. Day in and day out my heart is pining to have a vision of my beloved Gurudev in my meditation or at least in my dreams. I saw Your Holiness twice in my dream in my late morning sleep. The bliss I derived from these dreams was such that made me to repeat the short sleep with the fervent hope of seeing Thee in my dream. Thy form is permanently enshrined in my heart while my tongue is silently repeating Thy sacred Name throughout my waking state. My whole body and mind is saturated with Thee and Thee alone. My Dearest Father, I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done. No sooner the Asuric force starts to attack me, Thy form slowly appears in my mind. Then I hasten to surrender at Thy Lotus-Feet as a child to the mother and the dark cloud begins to clear. I pray to my Gurudev to redeem me from the dark forces and lead me by the enlightened path to the desired Goal of God-realisation in this very birth.

—Sri S. Suppiah,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.

I have no words to express myself, how happy I feel while writing this letter to Your Holiness. Reading Your precious books and singing Kirtans has given me inner happiness. The Mahamantra Kirtan has relieved me of a lot of pain. Sri Bhicka Chiba is a wonderful man. He told us about his visit to the Ashram. I would wish for nothing more but to be with you and breathe my last in Rishikesh.

—Sri Vijayalakshmi,
Johannesburg (South Africa).

I was pleasantly surprised by receiving your packet of books. I thank you much. It is very kind of you. The packet came just on the day when I returned from the hospital where I had 24 day's treatment. I had a great joy to look at the publications and your periodicals which could not be had in this country. I am in contact with the students who are inclined to the path of Yoga and have gained strength very much. I am striving for Self-realisation. I know, you can help me. How many mistakes can be avoided and how much strength can be attained with your presence. Self-realisation is my only aim.

—Sri J. Vacek, Copenhagen (Europe).

This stay at the Ashram has done me a great good mentally and physically. Even Dr. Mukherjee said that this visit has roused in him that dormant desire to do more Sadhana which he was neglecting for some time.

—Sri Rajani Mohan Chakravarty,
Calcutta.

Lately my husband brought one book from M.R. Dharam, then slowly contacted him and he gave us many books.

It was really wonderful to go through your books. It has given us a great peace, and without having your Darshan we have become your disciples.

—Dr. Mrs. Singhal,
C|O Capt. Dr. W. Singhal,
Burma Railways, Toungoo.

My wife and I enjoyed our stay at Rishikesh and the place is attracting us again. The holy atmosphere, the Bhajans and the hospital of the Ashram are still in our minds.

The more we stay there the nearer we are moving to God. That has been our feeling. We will go over there again for a longer stay when we will take a trip to Badri also.

—Sri S. Rajangam Iyer,
Srivaikuntham, Tirunelveli Dist.

I acknowledge with many thanks receipt of your card and the sacred books of "Wisdom Light" for which my bliss finds no limit. Father Siva, I cannot describe in words how happy I am, since Thou hast accepted me in Thy Holy Lotus Feet. This is due to Thy extreme Grace towards me. I have found the Treasure in Thee. Thy inspiration is so much alive that I always find Thee in my presence. How I can do any evil in Thy presence! I find eternal happiness, satisfaction and glory due to Thy kind inspiration. I start my job with Thy Name, I start my day with Thy Name, and I go to bed with Thy Name. Thou hast so kindly bestowed upon me a new life, full of glory, health and spiritual Bliss. Kindly improve my Voice so that I can do Kirtan nicely. Gurudev, let me have your blessings. Keep me ever in your Holy Lotus Feet and protect me.

—Sri Jayantilal M. Thanki,
Nairobi, (East Africa).

In many instances when I turned my thoughts to You, I feel a harmony. In some particular moments I can get in touch with you, though you live so far. I must increase my concentration faculty through a clarifying analysis in order to strengthen my will, to have a receptive mood to receive your help. Now I am quiet and serene, also among the material storm. I am indebted to You for this serenity.

You are helping me. When I live in my happy moments, I do not write any more, as I feel your vigorous and powerful vibrations.

—Sri Dr. Eglo Mancioppi,
Milan. Itlay.

I need your help to straighten myself out. I need will power to stay vigorously in my Sadhana. I need some explanation as to keep myself in understanding and all round comprehension. I am only 16 years old. I have not yet had success that I can talk about yet in my meditations, though I have done some, not enough to get far, though enough to have some realisation one would think and yet I have not enough. I am awakening spiritually. I entreat you to shed light on the path. Already I feel better in the knowledge that I have a Guru and this letter shall in due time reach you.

—Sri Eddy Parker,
(Agni Mukta Kailashananda)
International Compaign for Human Rights
California. U.S.A.

Your letter has praised me too much. I scarcely deserve it. The Divine Life Society's work is done by your Grace, not by us. We are nothing. It is you in your cosmic self who is active.

—Sri B.B. Desai,
Divine Life Society,
BAHRAIN.
(Persian Gulf)

Salutations and prostrations. OM NAMAH SIVAYA. I will be soon at Thy Holy Feet to serve and adore Thee.

—Sri Marguerita Ariss,
Baghdad. Iraq.

Beloved Guru, my best adorations for Your inspiring works. For my own sake I will report that I now have approached You as my Guru in the following way. You are the ocean of charity, selfless service and are pouring out Your learnings to me as warm showers. I am now a piece of ice which will drop into Your ocean, where my stiff mind will melt at last to be one with you. The God is living in Your heart and from there he is leading me as a Hindu.

The Sivananda School of Yoga in Oslo is now working very steady. It started with 21 pupils. The members are keeping it with great interest. And they are surprised greatly to see the fair progress they have done in such a short time. We have had four trainings. We use Your book as teaching material. During the training I put in some sentences from your issue "Wisdom Light". I read from your diary chapter and tell them that Yoga learnings through You do not have any 'commands' but with advice to the followers to the right way. I hope that I am working right. I also lend out the books I receive and the leaflets You send me. So the seed is sown and it grows. Best regards from all the pupils and myself to You and Your staff. We ask You to pray for us and especially for those who do not believe. May Lord bless You with showers of divine rain.

—Sri Eyvind Kulsrud,
D.L.S., Oslo, Norway.

I repeat Maha Mritunjaya Mantra for your good health. I am miserable when I cannot do my Sadhana regularly. O Siva I am not able to express my gratitude. In spirit I am always staying on the banks of the Holy Ganga. My desire is to serve the Great One untiringly.

—Sri Agnete Havmoller,
Ebeltoft. Denmark.

Being aware of the tremendous work you are doing, we did not dare to write to Your Holiness so often. But, we cannot bear it any longer and have to send you at least a few words. We go on with Sadhana and regularly practise at least a few exercises.

I have put into a stand of a Christmas Tree a pole to which I have painted a picture of our Guru, just on the level with my eyes when sitting in the cross-legged position. Before going to bed and just after awakening I practice Japa, looking at this picture and chanting the Mantra: "Om Namah Sivanandaya". I chant this Mantra mentally even during the work. In the morning also I practise the 12 Asanas (Surya Namaskar). I cannot speak yet of a great progress. But —never mind—great progress, little progress or no progress at all. I will persevere. I will go on with this routine. And I am sure that with the help of the Lord and my Guru, I shall attain the Goal. A great aid in concentration on my Guru have been the two Volumes of Sivananda Day-to-Day. Please, if it were possible I would be immensely grateful to Your Holiness to send me a book about the life of our Guru from the pre-ashram days, before His Sannyasa.

—Sri Ferdinand and Elizabeth Blazek,
Czechoslovakia. Prague.

Must I repeat that there is a great need for Yoga Teachings among the Russian speaking people. I thank you very much for sending me your books. I read and appreciate them very much. And I try to pass them around to interest others in your Yoga teachings. With most sincere appreciation and deep devotion, I am

—Sri Olga v. Duboschard,
Hollywood. California.

Delighted to receive your letter. I will be further happy to receive your books which will arrive in due course. I know that the place where I will find real peace and Truth is at Rishikesh under your Holy guidance, and that I will learn more from you in a week than I will from book study in a year, and I long for the day when I will be with you in all humility. I daily follow certain Asanas, and more particularly Pranayam and I am very fit and well. I expect to catch a ship for Calcutta from New Zealand in August and in due course arrive at Rishikesh. I will close this letter now assuring you not one day passes that my thoughts are not with you, as I appreciate that you and you only on this earth can give me the truth and peace.

—Sri J. Cummings,
Suva. Fiji Islands.

When receiving your periodicals and scriptures, the first joy is always Your Picture. It radiates so much goodness. You remember me of my father. He admired the Yoga Asanas and I had always to do gymnastics, received no alcohol and no cigarettes. Very nice: "Siva with Rudra Veena"—I do like music very much. I am so glad that my Guru incorporates everything I love. The thought of you is my greatest hold. Please keep my heart—then it will become as you desire. Everything is in your hands.

—Sri Sivananda Lori,
Munich. Germany.

With great reverence and conscious of the Grace that you answered my letter. I thank you very much. Only now I understand better the significance of prayer, my stammered words have taken form and have already given me greater inner tranquillity. Srimati Margarita made me the gift of your words from your valued books, translated into my language. They are my daily company and help me in a unbelievable manner. Your letter is now added a further document. Slowly awakes into me a peace, which I never knew before. Miracles occur through Grace. Everyday I begin my work with prayer and reflection over your words, that I may fulfil what is wanted. The increasing strength into me changes me truly and it is my sincere wish to be a support for the Divine work. With this purpose I try to become a peaceful man, so that I may indirectly contribute to the Divine work. Thanks to your Grace which is His Grace, and to your prayers which are His Grace, the means are revealed to me which lead me on the path of righteousness. May God help me, not only to see the path, but to tread it and to overcome the obstacles.

—Sri Theophil Schneider,
"Synthese Universelle"
Geneva. Switzerland.

Salutations and adorations unto Thee. Thou art Siva Shakti. Thou art Christ, my Saviour. Thou art my Saviour. I want to become a Yogi. It is dearest than life. I have to be patient. Some authors say: "Yoga is dangerous. You risk to get mad." If it is so, I take that risk. As long as Thou art in my heart, I fear not. Please, your disciple is waiting a line in reply from her spiritual father and mother.

—Sri Marguerite Ariss,
Baghdad., Iraq.

I am really grateful for sending me your recent publications. Almost one year passed since I saw you last in India. Time is passing very fast, but time image with your enlightening would always retain in my heart. I live in Japan, far away from India, but I would like to join in celebrating the 71st Birthday of Your Holiness.

—Sri Sakae Kanemastsu,
Yokohama. Japan.

I thank you very much for your letter, for your good answer. You are very good. Your heart is love for me, for the humanity. Thank you. Thank you. I shall go to India to rest with you in the Ashram, to receive your lessons, your help, your Darshan. My mother will come with me. Beloved Guruji, I thank you very much with all my heart. I ask your help very much. I hope to receive another letter from you soon. I give you, my dear beloved Guruji, all my respects and love.

—Sri Jaya Devi,
(Mrs. M.C. Touchais),
Paris. France.

I wish to tell you how at first sight I became attached to your good work. I am all happy about my growing faith in your Divine work. Help me to overcome obstacles which daily confront my life. I must thank you for conducting prayers for my success in my forthcoming examinations and I trust that you always remember me in your prayers.

—Sri George A. Doris,
Cane Grove. Br. Guiana.

Hope my return to Egypt will increase the overflow of your kind spiritual intentions. Egypt and India having deeper roots in history than other countries have.

—*Sri E. Y. Saad,*
Damascus.

I was very happy when I received your letter because I did not expect a letter from you. You conducted prayers for my uncle and Mr. Smock's daughter. My very cordial thanks for your help. I will never forget your readiness to help.

—*Sri Ernst Hiebsch (Jun.),*
Vienna, Austria.

How can I thank you enough for your wonderful letter, one to our Divine Life Group at Minto Park. I am so happy and grateful to you. Swamiji, your Initiation of a Mantra has given me so much happiness. It will always be very sacred to me. You are so kind and good to me. I know that your words will encourage all of us. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for the Menlo Park Branch. Let us all be with you in this Kingdom. Promise me you will never leave us—never.

We spent two most wonderful weeks in Durban. Sri Srinivasan is just wonderful. I am sure a chip off his Guru! Yo alone are my Lord. I cannot conceive of any God beyond you. I cannot love an abstraction. All I can see, all I can feel for me SIVANANDA. You are my life. When I pray, it is to you. When I am in trouble my thoughts go to you. When I sing it is for you. I know nothing except that you exist. I am still too much attached to body and not having seen God, my mind cannot conceive Him. You have a human body and mean so much more to me. My Master has no time

—so little time, no, no time at all. But he found time to write to me in his own handwriting. I just cannot believe it. It might be due to my past Karma. You say that I must get up early in the morning. How well you know my weakness. I will have to fight hard. I know only through meditation in the early morning will I be able to melt the iron door of my heart. I feel too weak to really manage all the wonderful virtues that one is supposed to acquire. How dare I say such things, when I have the most wonderful Guru in the world, and if he so wishes anything can happen. My thoughts are one-pointed with you—can you feel it? How can I develop my mental radio so that I could tune into my Guru? I am sure that just thinking of it does not help. Is there some special way? I feel very happy today and this is only because of your Grace. May all enjoy this Bliss. May all feel that they have found a real Home.

—Sri Mrs. Anna Maria Levien.
Pretoria, South Africa.

I have read some of your books and I also read how you help other people in their examinations, circumstances and life. As I read your books, I have more faith in you and I pray to you for the success in my examinations.

—Sri Kassie Nauth Jagnarine,
Berbice, British Guiana.

I feel induced to make use of your kind proposal, to contact you Dear Master when I feel inclined to do so. I go to a Hatha Yoga School started by your pupil Sri J. Bert Riha. He is an Austrian and has much sympathy here. By mere chance I saw his Diploma issued by the Yoga Vedanta Forest University and signed by you. He became a Yogiraj on 8-9-1955, the exact date of my marriage. I am very glad to find a Vienna Yoga Teacher and that too your pupil. I meet a Teacher, who is your student. Very often I am thinking of you, being a great consolation in sad hours.

I convey you my best wishes for your 71st Birthday. May our Lord give you the power and His help to give you all you need to work for mankind.

—Sri Hans Ulzer,
Wien III, Austria.

SIVANANDASHRAM

HEADQUARTERS OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

The central meaning of the Divine Life Society and this Headquarters' Ashram is the widest possible propagation of the most precious and the best elements of the great Culture and traditions of inner India. His Holiness Swami Sivanandaji has been striving ceaselessly through this Society, for the past quarter of a century, to bring about worldwide dissemination of the vital ethical and spiritual idealism of India and to scatter broadcast the knowledge of Yoga, Vedanta, Dharma and the ideal life divine virtues, Sadachara, selfless service universal brotherhood and unity of man.

This Ashram is thus a Centre of the dissemination of the lofty knowledge of Bharatavarsha's living idealism. It exists simultaneously in three more aspects:-

(a) The Ashram serves as a place of preservation of the ancient tradition and cultural practices that have come down as a time-honoured heritage.

(b) His Holiness has built up this Ashram, (Headqrs. of the Divine Life Movement), to serve as a model of many-sided altruistic activities to serve as an ideal to copy. Thus you have different types of activities aimed at bringing about a many-sided unfoldment of the human personality and with all blending harmoniously with one another.

(c) Equally important is the function of the Ashram in modern India as an ideal place of retreat for the educated citizen of Free India, wherein he can renew himself and re-create and refresh his being physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. The Ashram offers a peaceful haven, wherein is provided ample opportunity and actual help for the restoration of the troubled, conflict-ridden and psychologically traumatised personality of the modern man.

When this meaning is grasped, then an observer in the Ashram will have gained the right and proper perspective to the different phases of the activities that will present themselves to his gaze, as he goes round the Ashram passing through its different departments. The main and the central purpose being universal spiritual awakening of mankind through the systematic wide dissemination of the wisdom and the practical idealism of our Culture, naturally the salient feature of the Ashram work would be seen as its Publication activity. An out-turn of voluminous spiritual literature is the method adopted for the propogation of the wisdom of this land and its eternal values and its lofty way of life based on the conception of Dharma, ethical discipline and the spiritual purpose of human activity. The well-equipped electrically worked Printing Press at the Ashram, thus, forms the pivot of the work being carried on here. Books treating of all aspects of self-culture and spiritual development, several periodicals, countless spiritual tracts and leaflets for free distribution—all come in a continuous unbroken stream from this Press and reach all parts of the modern world.

The Office is a busy place, where young monks and novitiates work in the spirit of service of the Master and active worship of God in the different departments, like the Editorial Sections of the journals, the Membership Deptt., the magazines, correspondence form peoples all over India and all over the globe, the Publication League, Book Club etc. Typewriters are in a constant clatter preparing manuscripts for books and the numerous journals as well as in correspondence.

A modestly equipped Allopathic Hospital, with arrangements for indoor patients, does valuable service in making available free medical aid to sufferers. A reputed Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Works prepare genuine high quality Ayurvedic medicines that have gained a name in India and abroad. In-patients are provided with food and medicines free of cost and the hospital gets donations from the Philanthropists for its maintenance. Well-fitted Studio equipped on modern lines has prepared valuable movie films of the different Yogic exercises and Yoga processes. This is a valuable method of demonstrating the ancient techniques in actual practice. A beautiful temple and a prayer-hall provide scope for devotional exercises and prayer in an ideal setting. The Yoga-Museum serves to give in brief and serves to give at a glace the essence of Yoga and Vedanta in a Nutshell. The Ashram also runs a free Primary School to teach the 3 R's to the children of the neighbourhood, while imparting to them, at the same time, an appreciation for virtue, goodness and the ideals of truth, duty, service and devotion.

The daily routine of the Ashram is ideal and it is simple to the point of austerity. Day dawns with the early morning worship at the temple, when the big bell peals forth the starting of the new day. Prayer class is held in temple for 1 hour after which Asans are also taught free of cost. Students gather for the Yoga Class at 5-30 a.m. in the main Bhajan Hall. The Class concludes with prayer at 7 a.m. Next, His Holiness attends the office and people gather to have interview with him. Every inmate in the Ashram is now at his post engaged in the duty allotted to him. After a break for lunch about midday and a brief period of rest, routine duties in the different departments continue till 4 p.m.

Lecture Class in Yoga and Vedanta philosophy is held between 4 and 5 p.m. At 5 all are free until supper at 7 p.m. The Satsang or prayer gathering commences at 7-30 with singing of Divine Name in chorus and concludes with peace prayer at about 9 o'clock or a little later, and the Ashram-resident-workers retire to their rooms by 10.

The entire activities of this beautiful place, by the bank of the Ganges set amidst jungle on the slopes of the Garhwal mountains, is one pervaded by worshipfulness and dedication. The devoted workers serving under the guidance of His Holiness take this activity as part of their spiritual life. They believe in evolution through meditation, harmoniously combined with work done worshipfully. It is spiritualised activity that one meets here. The sole motive behind and the aim before all the work is service of mankind and welfare of the world, the only difference being the emphasis upon the ethical and the spiritual aspect of man's being.

In this Ashram one finds the heart of ancient Bharatavarsha throbbing within the bosom and the body of modern India. The Democratic Republic of Free India has, in Anandakutir, a treasure-chest holding the gems of our sublimest cultural ideals. Let the citizens of modern India enrich themselves from this treasure-chest.

Sivananda Nagar.
26-5-58.

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Deekshita and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and innate feeling of unity with all mankind. Though born in an orthodox family, Swamiji was broad-minded and catholic, pious and devout.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to those parts of the world which most needed his service. Malaya claimed him. He had also commenced editing a Health Journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind, renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify himself for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jeevanmukta.

In 1932 he started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born the Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga Vedanta Forest University was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 he undertook a lightning tour of India. In 1953 he convened the World Parliament of Religions. He is the author of over 200 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read his works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme and grow spiritually to be immortal and eternally peaceful and blissful.